

HEINRICH CONRIED



MONTROSE J. MOSES



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THE LIFE OF
HEINRICH CONRIED

BY
MONTROSE J. MOSES

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To

RICHARD GENÉE CONRIED

WHOSE FILIAL LOYALTY AND DEVOTION ENTERED LARGELY
INTO THE MAKING OF THIS BOOK

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INTRODUCTION

DURING his lifetime, Mr. Conried was besought by many of his friends to write his reminiscences. Had he done so, they would have been rich in personal flavor and professional association. But Mr. Conried's active life, almost to the day of his death, precluded any such leisurely occupation. Consequently, the following biographical sketch attempts in part to fix the progress of events in the career of the young Austrian weaver, who finally came to occupy one of the highest artistic posts America could offer him.

Lewis Carroll once very wittily said that autobiography was what biography ought to be. Under ideal conditions this definition is true. Mr. Conried did not leave much written evidence for the historian to use; hence his artistic ambition and his mental measurements have to be determined largely by his actual professional accomplishment. Those of his friends who came so often within range of his personality must realize that the significance of Heinrich Conried as a commanding figure is more historical

than personal. Whereas his charm and graciousness warmed and brightened many a circle, his correspondence is strictly business-like and to the point. The small moments in a man's life are of no significance unless they are recorded by the man himself: Mr. Conried left no such records. The wit which so often characterized him has come to the present writer second hand, and has necessarily lost something of that freedom which it once possessed.

There was much of the spontaneous in Heinrich Conried; he scintillated in a room full of people; he at once became the centre of attraction. But there was also much of the reserve in Heinrich Conried, and he hardly ever gave expression to his dreams. His was an elusive personality—now fascinating, then aggressively sarcastic and almost rude; now loquacious in anecdote, but almost taciturn where his inner self was concerned. His true friends knew that behind all this was the rare quality of the man. He often fell into long silences—and it is in the silence man really and truly and deeply lives, says Maeterlinck. While automobiling, Mr. Conried always sat next to the chauffeur, so that he need not talk if he did not wish. And he was equally as reserved in his correspondence.

Among all the papers handed me by Mr.

Conried's son, only a few afford me an opportunity of judging the man. If I have, in the following pages, succeeded in catching any of the personal color of the husband, the father, and the friend, I have the many to thank who knew him and who have generously talked with me of him. Even those who at one time or another had crossed swords with Mr. Conried, gave evidence of their admiration for him, and they recognized the healthy influence of his idealism in the theatrical field.

It is the idealism of Heinrich Conried which is the fundamental note of the man. I insist on this, despite the fact that the bulk of private papers in my possession show him in a business light. There are those who claimed that he commercialized Art; but if that were so, why was the Irving Place Theatre nearly always run at a loss? It is true that at the Metropolitan Opera House he conducted many things on a strictly business basis. Nevertheless, his distinctive efforts were artistic, however much they may have proven self-interested and profitable endeavors.

There was, none the less, much of the financier's discernment in Mr. Conried. Though he might never drive a bargain with his ideals, he sometimes did with the expression of these

ideals. He had the sense of monopoly, not often given to the artist; he had the ability of surrounding himself with those most serviceable to his purpose. Some of his friends claim that he was a poor business man. Answering the accusation that he had commercialized Opera, Mr. Conried himself confessed that, had he been the business manipulator his enemies claimed him to be, he would have resigned his post as Impresario a richer man than he was. However that may be, Mr. Conried for five years dealt in large figures—sometimes wisely and at other times unwisely. On the Continent he was known as the artistic scourge of Europe, so persistently did he denude the foreign opera houses of their best talent. His business instinct may have tempered his idealism somewhat, but none the less was the dreamer the dominating quality in the make-up of Heinrich Conried.

Being a reserved man, he spoke but little of his aspirations, of his plans. Perhaps the nearest he ever came to enthusiasm on paper was while speaking of the New Theatre, when it was merely a concept in his brain. He was a constant lecturer, but I am unfortunate in not possessing a single manuscript, preservative of his ideas concerning drama or German literature. He talked on Goethe and Schiller from

notes at the Irving Place Theatre, but none of these notes were preserved. He would often boast that he knew most of Goethe by heart. Yet I am convinced, however wanting I am in written evidence, that Heinrich Conried was intellectually well grounded; that he knew whereof he spoke.

A man who deals in German drama cannot help but become versed in literature—so intimately are the two connected. But from the Berlin days, Conried, as *regisseur*, was ever wedded to the standard plays,—so much so that, when he became stage-manager for Madame Mathilde Cottrelly, at the New York Thalia Theater, he showed no interest in anything except what was classic. Brought up in the traditions of national theatres, Mr. Conried grew naturally into the belief that the theatre should be preservative of the best writing for the stage. I do not claim for Mr. Conried broad culture, but I do claim that what culture he possessed was not superficial. With his artistic traditions and with his idealism, it would have been comparatively an easy matter for Heinrich Conried to have further educated himself for the requirements of the New Theatre, which he so eagerly wished for in America.

The professional career of Mr. Conried is of

historical importance. Since his time, the German population in New York has changed so materially that there is no longer much necessity for a distinctive playhouse, devoted wholly to German drama. The children of the new generation are Americans; and members of the '48 society, who used to support Mr. Conried while he was Director of the Irving Place Theatre, are decreasing rapidly in numbers. The consequence is that the now-called Deutsches Theatre, of New York, has to struggle for existence. Its *raison d'être* seems to have passed. But, during Mr. Conried's régime, it was an artistic home for the German people, and within its walls he offered an example of managerial policy which should have had, and did have, to a limited extent, beneficent effect on the American Manager.

In his career it will be seen that, wherever Mr. Conried's interest was actively engaged, there he left decided impress of his presence. As a manager, as an impresario, his position was always one of dignity and powerful importance. It is this fact I wish to establish in the following pages.

My indebtedness for information is so widespread that I can but express generally my gratefulness for the coöperation of Mr. Con-

ried's numerous friends. Many hours have been spent in warm-hearted reminiscence. But though in this biography we shall strive for a personal touch—in which Mr. Richard Conried has so ably assisted me—it is not a book of reminiscences, as much as it is a record of a very full and useful life.

MONTROSE J. MOSES.

NEW YORK, April, 1916.

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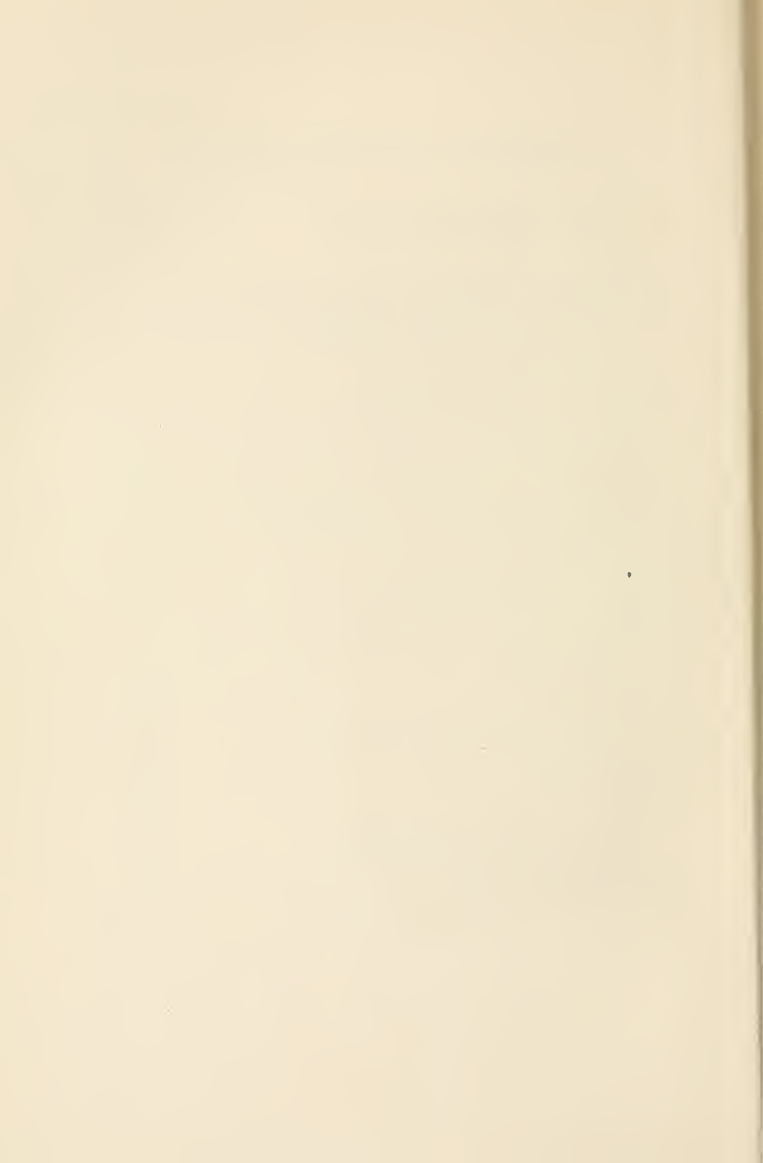
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THE LIFE OF HEINRICH CONRIED

CHAPTER I

CONRIED'S EARLY YEARS: Actor; Strakosch; meeting with Foerster; Vienna Burg Theater; Leipzig Stadt Theater. How Conried became manager of the Bremen Stadt Theater.

ON April 1st, 1896, Mr. Conried produced Hauptmann's "The Weavers" at the Irving Place Theatre. While preparing the scenery, he allowed his mind to stretch backward over a period of many years, when he was a boy, and the atmosphere was not unlike that surrounding the characters in the play. In order to make the scenery more realistic, Mr. Conried sent to his birthplace, Bielitz, in Austrian Silesia, for a loom and other details marking the peasant-weaver's home. In other words, the performance at the Irving Place Theatre was in many ways autobiographical, as reproducing the soil out of which Mr. Conried came. Therefore, Hauptmann's stage direction for his second act may serve to illuminate the

scene as it was at the birth of Heinrich Conried.

He came into the world on September 13, 1855, the son of Joseph and Gretchen Cohn. Some say that the father was even so far up in the world as to be the proprietor of a yarn factory; others claim that he was only a weaver in moderate circumstances—making a livelihood in a town which was noted for its woollen and linen industries, and for its manufacture of jute.

The boy's early years, therefore, were passed amidst looms, hanks of yarn, and reels. Maybe, when he became strong enough, he was given the task of lifting the baskets of bobbins from place to place. There was no sound of harmony brought to the ears of little Heinrich. Bielitz shook to the click and rattle of the shuttles, and there was the continued whirl of looms everywhere. Doubtless, social conditions in the little town were such as to make ambitious boys like Conried restive and spirited. The citizens of Bielitz must have nodded their heads in consternation when they passed crowds of workmen surrounding young Heinrich who, no sooner was he old enough to think for himself, was famed locally as a socialist stump-speaker. The father looked upon his boy as his successor in trade, and, as soon as possible, Heinrich was

set at the loom. It is even said that he became a master-workman, and that, when he was made a journeyman, his woven design pictured "Faust and Marguerite" in fifteen colors!

There were three brothers and one sister in the Conried family, but Heinrich was the only one to attain a position of distinction. When the time came for fortune to smile upon him, he did all that he could for those he had left behind in the old country. There were many who little deserved his assistance. But he was devoted to his people; the family feeling was strong within him, and he was ever a dutiful son. Whatever he could do, even under the greatest sacrifices, he did for them, especially for his parents.

The old father of Heinrich Conried has been described as the typical Jewish patriarch, with his long white beard and benevolent face. After his son left for America, the weaver would often turn longing eyes across seas. "If you should see my Heinrich," he would say to those about to sail for America, "take care of him. Don't let any harm come to him." Joseph Cohn died in 1889 and his wife in 1903. "Only twice did I see Heinrich Conried give way to tears," a friend told me, recalling his acquaintance with the Impresario. "The evening of 'Parsifal'—

after the strain was all over—he sat in his little office before his desk, overcome by his emotions. And in that same room he heard of the death of his mother.”

He was already on the highroad toward success when the latter passed away. I have unearthed a letter which explains the family loyalty he always possessed.

Vienna, October 19, 1903.

MY DEAR GOOD HENRY:

A heavy blow of fate has struck you, the heaviest a filial heart may receive; and I shall not even attempt to console you, as every consoling word would but be a profanation of your grief. And yet, if there could be a consolation for you, it must be this: that you have rendered life free of cares for your mother up to her great age; and she died happy and content, for she did see you at the height of your effort and your fame. Peace to her remains!

I press your hand and that of your dear Guste, and embrace you most heartily as your sincere friend,

A. SONNENTHAL.

At Bielitz, there were several friends of Conried's parents who were connected with the local theatre. Who knows but that Joseph Cohn

spent many a sleepless night, solving to himself the future of his boy. But instead of showing any strong inclination to become a weaver, Heinrich turned his thoughts to the theatre. For the lad used to catch and sell rare butterflies, and when he had gathered enough money for a theatre ticket, he would hie himself to the gallery as fast as his little legs would carry him, and there dream his dreams. What a wonderful thing—that day of days when he looked within his savings-box to find he had enough with which to buy himself a much coveted seat. No boy ever ran faster to the door of a theatre! But, alas for him, though he was first in line, when the doors were opened outward, they brushed the sturdy little chap behind them, while the crowds swept in! And there he was a prisoner. When he finally escaped, the house was full, and there was no ticket for him. So he had to go home with his coins, and count the hours until the next time! The catching of butterflies was not solely a commercial occupation with him; he became interested in them for their own sake, and many times in after life he would drolly boast that in those days he could tell the species of a butterfly by its very shadow.

Some accounts of Conried's early life state

that his aunt was the Frau Direktorin of the Bielitz theater. If so, why was it necessary for the boy to buy his tickets? However, we are given a pretty picture of little Heinrich's first trip to the play with this same aunt. It was on his fifth birthday, and his heart was all aglow with excitement. The temperament of the artist was thus early manifesting itself.

"May I not become an actor too?" he asked, turning his soft blue eyes upon her.

"When you grow up," she told him, "twenty years from now."

But in his mind there dawned a determination which later regulated the life of Heinrich Conried. The desire of five became a declaration at ten, and all through his school days, passed at the Oberrealschule, in Vienna, he dreamed and planned as is the way with boys. At the age of fifteen, he left school, and was apprenticed to a weaver. Here, he only repeated what has happened to every artist since the world began. His heart was elsewhere; and, though he worked energetically during the day, he would study plays by flickering candle at night.

Evidently, at Vienna, while at school, he put his histrionic gifts to the test, for it seems that he became interested in some amateur theatricals, and made his first appearance on the stage

of the Vienna Harmonic Theater, where the unprofessional often held forth. But the *première* ended in disaster. He had no lines to speak; instead, he was given an urn to carry across the stage. He had barely reached the centre when fright overtook him; he dropped the urn and fled. How many others like him have begun their careers in the same manner!

Soon his apprenticeship days were at an end; he breathed freely when he realized that he was now his own master. Yet, he must have heard from his orthodox father many warnings regarding the ungodliness of play-acting, and about the vagabondage of the theatre profession. Pressure must have been brought to bear in his home against his attempting such a livelihood; for suddenly he slipped away from the life of the looms, and hastened to Vienna. The career of Heinrich Conried, peasant boy, was finished.

There are traditions about everyone, and in this instance we are asked to picture Conried as a baker's boy, running along the streets of Vienna. It is more than likely, however, that he sought out his brother, who was a bank director, and through him was able to secure a position in the Commercial Bank, near Linz. About this time, his brother also brought him in contact

with Alexander Strakosch, though Conried makes no mention of the fact in the one autobiographical record left by him. Even though a clerk in a banking-house, he found time to frequent theatres, and to hang about cafés, where the actors congregated, and where he could imagine himself to be one like them. His narrative begins at this point.

"I got work in a banking-house, where the salary was sufficient to pay for my lodging, for theatre tickets, and for meals at a little coffee-house, where an actor of the famous Burg Theater was occasionally to be seen. For a long time, I contented myself with gazing at him from a distant table. But day by day I came a little nearer; and finally I ventured to sit at the same table with him. Then we became really acquainted: I suppose he was amused by my frank awe and admiration. After a while, he invited me to attend his classes, and that was my first real start in the profession.

"Through this actor, I met Dr. Strakosch, of the Stadt Theater, and later Foerster,* who was

* August Foerster (1828-89), in 1855, was at the Vienna Burg Theater; from 1876-82, he was Director of the Leipzig Stadt Theater; from 1883-88, Director of the Berlin Deutsches Theater; 1888, Director of the Hofburg Theater, in Vienna. Among his chief rôles may be cited: *Wachtmeister* in "Wallenstein's Lager"; *Friedrich Wilhelm* in "Zopf und Schwert"; *Nathan*; *King Lear*; *Meister Anton* in Hebbel's "Maria Magdalena."

at that time stage-manager of the Burg Theater. Dr. Strakosch told me I was too short to be an actor; Foerster, on the other hand, encouraged me, and said he thought I had talent enough to overcome my physical shortcomings. He took me to his class, where I read a poem. He then offered to teach me every day for four weeks without pay, on condition that I would promise, at the end of that time, either to give up the stage altogether, or to sign a contract, whichever way he decided.

"Of course I promised. I had to earn my bread and butter—mostly bread—at the bank, and could not attend his classes. But he took me with him on his early walks to the Kursaal, where he drank the waters. There was no one about at that hour—five in the morning—and my lessons were given in the Auer Garten.

"At the end of the third week, I was told to attend a test rehearsal at the Burg Theater, and I was picked out of forty-two for an engagement. I felt that my career was made. I was at last a member of the famous Burg Theater, the goal of every German and Austrian actor!"

Whatever fundamental education was received by Conried was due to the discipline of the Vienna Oberrealschule, and by the time he became acquainted with Strakosch, he had fairly

well trained himself in certain tricks of the reciter. "I believe it was before an august assemblage at the Academy," said his son, "that my father read some fairy-tales for entrance into a class. The ordeal—which in every way was stupendous—took place before an audience of unusual import, and when young Conried came on, there was much talking in the hall. But the actor in him was dominant. He paused for several seconds—just long enough to make people realize that he intended to be heard,—and then he began. Fairy-tales, at best, are difficult things to read aloud, but I have been told that it did not take long for my father to hold his audience spellbound." What opportunity for reminiscences, when Strakosch visited the United States in the '90's, and lectured on German authors!*

It was through Foerster, however, that the career of Heinrich Conried, the actor, was successfully launched.

"I at once gave up my position at the bank," he continued in recollection, "and told my family

* Alexander Strakosch, a dramatic teacher and reciter, was born in 1846. In 1860, he was an actor at the Deutsches Theater, in Osenpest. Then he went to the Hof Theater, in Hanover. Following that, he went to Paris for Rhetoric and Conservatory work. At different times he has been associated with the Leipzig Stadt Theater. In 1905, he became connected with Reinhardt's Schauspielschule, in Berlin.

of my good luck. Up to that time, I had not said a word about my theatrical aspirations. They considered it a disgrace to have any of their kin associated with the theatre. I didn't care; to be a member of the Burg Theater was every actor's ambition. The world seemed before me in those days, and I was ecstatically hopeful and happy.

"For two years, I worked night and day. When not studying my parts, I spent all my time hanging about Foerster, familiarizing myself with his methods as an actor and as a manager. Then came a chance to join a traveling company as leading character actor. This gave me the best possible discipline—the opportunity to play all sorts of parts, from farce to tragedy. Again for two years I worked hard, eighteen hours a day, with no salary to speak of. We played all through Austria and Germany, and, in 1873, we visited my home town of Bielitz. I was then at the head of the company. We were rather crude, I think, compared with actors nowadays. I was pretty bad, but the others were worse—they must have been awful!"

Going a little more into detail, I find that through Foerster, the young actor became a member of the Theater Akademie in July, 1872,

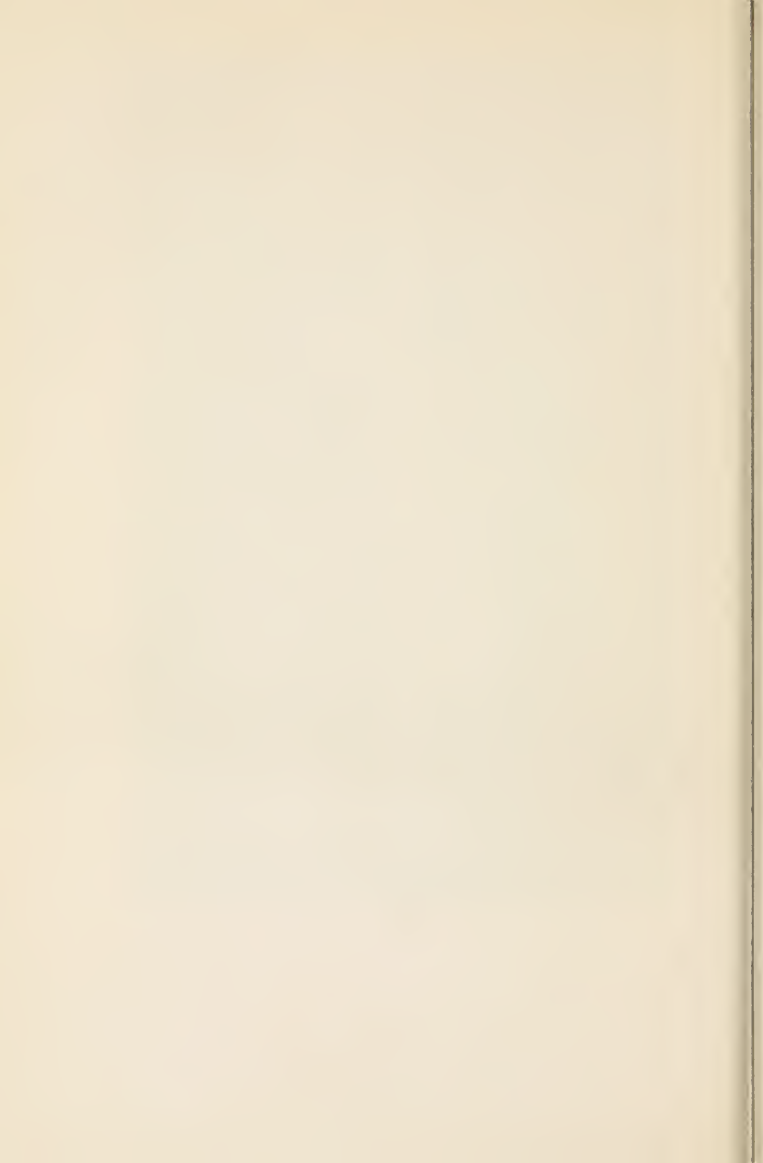
under the direction of Edward Kirschner, and, in November of the same year, he entered the newly opened Residenz Theater. The beginning of the year 1873 found Conried playing in trial performances before Dingelstaedt, and then there followed that six months' experience as a travelling actor which brought him back again to his home town. Due to the watchful eye of Foerster, young Conried, on February 9, 1873, was enrolled as a member of the Burg Theater in Vienna—then regarded by everyone as the highest home of German art.

His associates, who remember him in those days, describe him as he used to sit in the Café Griensteidl,—a lovable youth, with the official post of "supernumerary," but with such a persuasive pose about him, that his manner would have led a stranger to believe he was engaged for some prominent character rôle. The real fact was that, at this time, Conried simply came on the stage to announce, "My lord, the horse awaits your pleasure," or he lent his youthful lungs to swell the furor of a mob.

But, whatever it was he did, we may be sure that he entered into it with all his power. More often heard than seen, he made the most of his opportunities. He was not alone in his youthful conceit. There were others—actors, au-



CONRIED AS GRINGOIRE



thors and artists,—who used to frequent the Café Griensteidl. “How often,” writes an unsigned friend, “have I sat with Conried in those days, in that part of the coffee-house overlooking the Herrengasse. Zahlmarkör Franz used to say: ‘There are guests in the coffee-house who would do better if they were bakers.’ And we regarded these words as from an oracle, for Zahlmarkör Franz, of Griensteidl, was a figure amongst us, as easy-going with prominent diplomats as he was with Sonnenthal, Josef Wagner, and others. Besides which, he had been immortalized by Karl Sitter in ‘Figaro.’ Then came more prosperous days for Heinrich Conried, and he went from our midst.”

In spite of his physical handicap, the young actor progressed. He tried to overcome his height in a manner thoroughly in accord with the acting methods of the day. There are those who recall the way in which he and his associates would mouth and rant. There was not a stage movement of the day that did not call for stereotyped gesture and pose. This manner was called “heroic,” and plays were written so as best to develop the heroic manner. Conried never quite escaped his training. Even later on in private, one could easily detect the pose of the Thespian; he never lost it.

When he made his début at the Burg Theater, on February 23, 1873, he was a mere boy, with a shock of brown hair, and with eyes which betrayed him as a dreamer. There was a cleft in his chin, which gave to his rather prominent mouth a note of indulgence.

A popular idol of the day was Josef Lewinsky,* his name was upon everyone's lips. Not only that, but he left his impress on the dress of the day, and it goes without saying that the Conried of this period adopted the Lewinsky style.

For two years, therefore, he did dramatic "chores" at the Burg Theater, and, during that activity (1873-74), he at the same time occupied the position of Master of Declamation, at the Theater Akademie and at the Conservatory. In 1874, Conried went to the Berlin National Theater, where he assumed the name of "Robert Buchholz." He now was entrusted with character parts, and was also assigned the post of Ober-regisseur. It was not long before he became a declared favorite with the public, and

* See "Das Wiener Burg Theater," von R. Lothar (*Dichter und Darsteller series*). Pictures of Foerster on pp. 108, 109; Lewinsky, p. 124; picture of the Burg Theater, p. 125; Lewinsky as *Richard III*, p. 127; caricature of Lewinsky, p. 128; interior of the Vienna Burg Theater, p. 132; Josef Kainz, p. 200. Another excellent picture of Kainz is to be found in "Neuer Theater Almanach," Berlin (1911).

was identified with such rôles as *Franz Moor* in "Die Räuber," *Mephisto* in "Faust," and *Iago* in "Othello."

By this time, Foerster, who, when Conried first met him, had been a leading comedian in Vienna, had become chief stage-manager at the Leipzig Stadt Theater.* He sent for his young protégée, and Conried received an engagement for leading rôles,—along with Kainz, Sommerstorff, Pohl, and Ludwig Barnay. This was in 1876. Director Angelo Neumann † has written in retrospect of Foerster and of those he brought with him to Leipzig. Though Conried's ambition was receiving satisfaction, his inordinate pride would often get the better of him, as shown in the following anecdote.

"Barnay," ‡ writes Neumann, "was being starred at the Stadt Theater, and was scheduled to play *Othello* to Conried's *Iago*. At rehearsal, there arose a terrible conflict between the two actors. Barnay, aiming to give a realistic presentment of the *Moor*, attempted to walk all over the poor *Iago*-Conried, who was by no

* For an early history of this theatre, see K. F. Langhaus's "Das Stadt Theater in Leipzig."

† Director of the Prague Deutsches Theater.

‡ For a biographical sketch of Barnay, see Berlin "Neuer Theater Almanach," p. 53. A picture of Barnay as *Mark Antony* is also to be found in the New York *Dramatic Mirror*, December, 1897, p. 29. Painting by Tadema.

means stalwart. In his 'business,' Barnay wished to kneel on Conried's chest—and Barnay was by no means a light-weight. Conried objected, and both artists complained to me. My only way out was to claim that, by contract, Conried was not bound to remain physically inactive, while another pounded him about the stage. But when the evening came, even though Barnay was at last convinced that he must seek some other way of depicting the *Moor's* rage, Conried's courage failed him, and he lagged behind in the scene, much to the undoing of Barnay, who now had just cause for complaint. Conried had shown insubordination, and so I gave him leave to look elsewhere for a position. This dissolution of our contract at that moment was a fortunate thing for Conried, as events proved."

He was barely twenty-one years of age when he became manager of the Stadt Theater in Bremen, under very remarkable circumstances, and with very remarkable results. In 1877, he went to the Municipal Theater, engaged for first character parts. "It was wonderful," said one of his friends, "that a young man should step in at the psychological moment, and make such a success. But the events that were now to happen, made him in after years very dis-

satisfied with any subordinate position. Thereafter, Heinrich Conried recognized no one as above him; from then on, he adopted an imperious manner which instilled confidence into those under him, but which gained for him many enemies. Imagine a committee of singers and actors turning to a mere boy, and making him their chairman, to carry on, with the consent of the municipal authorities, their theatrical affairs."

"From that moment," declared Mr. Emanuel Lederer, "Conried began to realize his managerial capabilities. For, when the experiment was finished, it was found that he had paid all of the actors their full salaries. Even the arrears, by his clever arrangement, were made good with 'stars' of the first rank, like the great tenor, Albert Niemann, who proved such a drawing card, and who made Conried's initial venture an acknowledged success. Undoubtedly it was this success, the talk of artistic Bremen, which drew the attention of many theatrical managers to Conried. Among them was Neuen-dorff, who was instrumental in bringing him to America."

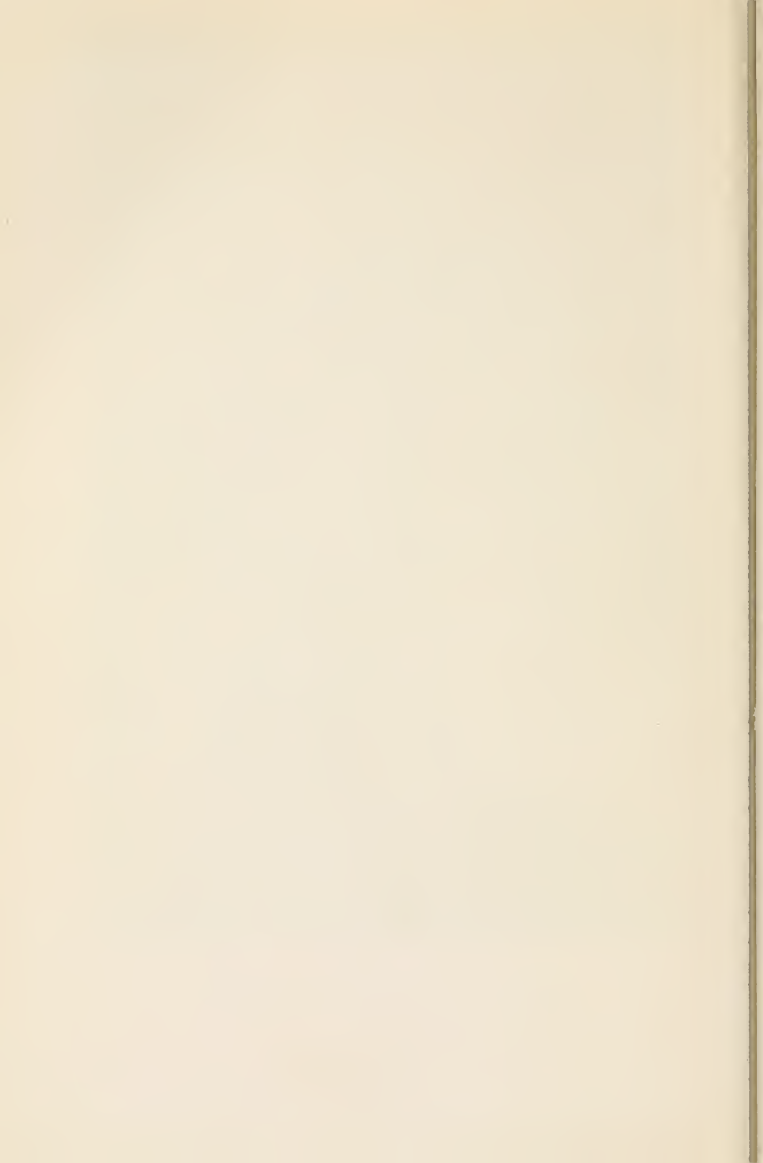
This was not the first time that the Stadt Theater had been in artistic and financial difficulties. History records that the years 1820, 1825,

1832, and 1835, were dark ones for that institution. But when Conried joined the ranks, the theatre was going through very dire straits, under the directorship of Ackermann, a man whose antecedents of the same name had possessed distinctive reputation. When January 1, 1878, dawned, there was no money in the exchequer for the payment of salaries. On January 10, Ackermann declared publicly that he was insolvent. A corporation, composed of about two hundred members, was penniless. The actors were to be cast out of work in the middle of a season, when new occupation would be difficult to find. And how could actors without any money go elsewhere to seek employment? The conditions were desperate, even though Ackermann had agreed with his company at the Stadt Theater that they should continue to play under the direction of a committee selected from amongst themselves.

The theatre was closed for a few days' preparation, and, on January 3, it opened with "Die Sieben Raben," a fairy-tale by Emile Pohl, who afterward was himself to become Director of the Bremen playhouse. This committee, which Ackermann suggested, was formed of nine members: William Fuchs, Dr. Adolf Franckel, Heinrich Conried, Kappelmeister



A SCENE FROM "GRINGOIRE," WHEN HEINRICH CONRIED WAS
AN ACTOR AT THE BURG THEATER



Arthur Seidl, Joseph Niering, Caesar Schmockel, C. A. Hellmuth, F. Manns, and the ballet-master, Oscar Polletin. It proved to be too large—too many cooks for the broth—and so, by January 7, the committee had dwindled to three: Regisseur Wilhelm Fuchs, Dr. Franckel, and Conried. The latter was the best known to Bremen audiences, for they had often seen him play, and they liked his *Cassius* in “Julius Cæsar,” his *Lord Burleigh* in Laube’s “Essex,” and his *Gessler* in Schiller’s “Wilhelm Tell.”

The press and the public immediately gave recognition to Conried’s unexpected energy in the handling of affairs. He readily found himself supreme ruler and dictator. When the time came to part from his associates, they gave him a heartfelt testimonial, for, with much disinterested zeal, he had weathered them through a dreadful storm.

Madame Cottrelly, who was so soon after this to become associated with Conried in America, describes graphically the scene, when the manager of the Bremen Theater called his company around him for consultation. What would they do? Each member was asked for some solution out of the difficulty. When Conried’s turn came, everyone was surprised to see him draw a paper from his pocket. What did this

mean? It meant that the little man, with the boyish exterior, had come to the meeting prepared. He had all the salary details at his fingers' ends; he knew what every member of the theatre staff was getting—from the director of tragedy to the director of light opera. He knew to a dot the running expenses of the Stadt Theater.

Madame Cottrelly continues: "‘Now,’ suggested this youth, with so much of the physical against him, ‘if we had so many subscribers, they would cover the expenses of the theatre. Certainly there are sufficient outside friends to help us in this respect.’ Then, turning to his fellow actors, he said, ‘Will you be willing to receive, as salary, a percentage of what comes in from the public—the percentage dependent upon your relative worth, as I estimate it?’ Those who had come to the meeting were speechless. The facts were before them, and here was a practical suggestion from a mere slip of a lad."

As a body, they saw the feasibility of the plan, and so agreed, with a real show of enthusiasm. And who, they said, should be the director of the enterprise as outlined? Surely, no one but young Conried himself. All this brought him into the prominence he craved.

The town greeted him wildly, and at the close of the unprecedented "run," he was given a benefit.

"Conried was now very ambitious to advance," said Madame Cottrelly, "but the Germans move slowly; they are not, as they are in America, on the go all the time! This boy wanted to be Ober-regisseur, but Germany had a traditional prejudice against youth for responsibility; such a post should be given an older man. Conried must wait. It was then that Neuendorff, through his European agent, heard of how the Bremen Stadt Theater had been managed; and it was then that he went abroad from New York with determination to bring the boy back with him. The promise of position, which carried a salary of two hundred dollars a month, was offered him."

Light-hearted and confident, with little experience, Conried now turned his face toward America. He was eager for any and every executive responsibility. There was that within him which convinced him of his managerial talent. He realized that his greatest powers and prospects lay along this line. Thenceforward he gave to his histrionic accomplishments a second place in his plans. In the future he would be a great manager. The early training

he had just gone through was to prove invaluable to him now. He left Germany with German idealism thoroughly impregnating his make-up, and with thorough belief in himself. And these two elements were a large part of the character of Heinrich Conried.

CHAPTER II

IN NEW YORK UNDER ADOLF NEUENDORFF. The German Theatre in 1877. Conried as a "star"; becomes stage-manager for Mathilde Cottrelly. The Thalia Theater: German actors. Conried at the Star Theatre, and at the Academy of Music. The business activity of Conried and Goldmark. The Casino Theatre: stage-manager for Rudolph Aronson; comic operas and "stars" of the period. The Conried Opera Company. Marriage; birth of a son. Barnay. Citizenship. The Ocean Comfort Company.

HENRICH CONRIED came to America at a propitious moment; his advancement in the theatre was coincident with a time when New York City was ripe for a German theatre. There was a body of German-American citizens who still had within them the indomitable spirit of '48. The absence of this spirit would in no way have prevented Conried from showing his managerial talent, but it did much to make his régime at the Irving Place Theatre a success. Had Conried been the Director of the German Theatre to-day, he would not have found his task so easy, and he would not have found the German audiences so loyal. The national spirit is American, not German, and the new

generation of Germans no longer thinks in the mother tongue. There may be loyal efforts manifest on all sides to save the German Theatre in New York, now that the older generation is thinning in its ranks; but there is small hope for its future, without subsidy.

Nevertheless, the German Theatre in New York City has a distinctive history. Under Neuendorff, Conried was brought right into the midst of it. The only theatre critic who has treated the subject adequately is Arthur G. Abrecht; he has given the history in a newspaper article * worthy of more permanent form. It is generally conceded that the German theatre evolved from a dilettante enthusiasm displayed at the German Vereins. In these social gatherings, private theatricals were given, and talent was eagerly sought for among the members. On Sundays, plays were performed in the different Verein halls. It was a matter of art and beer, and even though art might be bad, the beer was unfailingly good.†

* I am indebted to Mr. Abrecht for the statements herein made as to the history of the German theatre. See "Das Deutsche Theater in N. Y." *Sonntagsblatt des N. Y. Staats-Zeitung*, April 16, 1905.

† According to Mr. Abrecht, the *N. Y. Staats-Zeitung* for February 7, 1840, describes a performance given by a German Dramatic Verein. Performances occurred on Sundays in the Franklin Theatre. Conried was later to give Sunday plays under legal restrictions at the Irving Place.



MR. CONRIED AS A YOUNG MAN WHEN HE FIRST CAME
TO AMERICA

[illegible]

The Franklin Theatre, on Chatham Street, was the first house to employ regular professional German players. The admission prices ranged from 12½ cents to half a dollar; Emanuel Striese was the Director. Obviously, there must have been some opposition to the undertaking, for I find the record of a theatrical man trying to keep the people from patronizing the German plays. This prejudice was probably due to the fact that, in 1840, there was a feeling against identifying the Franklin Theatre as a strictly German place of amusement.

The St. Charles Theatre, 19 Bowery, is next to be noted, and in succession there followed Mitchell's Olympic Theatre, of 422 Broadway, which was renamed by the Directors the Deutsches National Theater; Dramatic Hall, on Elizabeth Street, and the Lyceum Theatre. Most of these places relied very largely for income upon the proceeds from the bar, and Mr. Abrecht states that had it not been for the bar, many actors of the time might have had to beg for salary.

In the picturesque person of Otto von Hoym* we see the first sign of order in the

* Hoym left the stage at the time of the Civil War, and aided in the organization of the Forty-second Regiment, Volunteers of New York. He was Captain of Company H. As a prisoner, he was sent to Libby Prison. In 1862-3, he reappeared on the stage at the Stadt Theater, which opened in 1864, at 45 Bowery. The

history of the New York German Theatre. He was both actor and manager, and found financial backing in Edward Haman. The Deutsches Stadt Theater (1854-64) was the first German playhouse in the city to meet with pronounced success. Indeed, business was so large that the management was obliged to look for more ample quarters. Here, the habit of making "guesting" engagements was instituted, Daniel Bandmann being the first "guest." Among the other actors employed in the company were Eleonore Hübner, Alexander Pfeiffer, Caroline Lindemann, and Frau Elise Unger. The Hoym company also acted there, and in the orchestra Adolph Neuendorff was beating a drum.

The next German theatre was located in the Palace of Mirrors, at 585 Broadway, a place later given over to musical pieces, for Lillian Russell, Nat C. Goodwin and Francis Wilson appeared there.

The name of Neuendorff now becomes prominent in the history of the New York German Theatre. He had come, as an emigrant, from Hamburg, and had been educated in the city

Assistant Director was Edward Haman. In 1867, Hoym retired, because of eye trouble, and returned to Germany, where he died in 1873. Haman, left to himself and his friends, lost most of his money, and was obliged to go into bankruptcy. The theatre was closed in 1872.

schools. In 1856, living in the same house with Joseph Weinlich, a German basso, singing at Niblo's Garden, Neuendorff was taught the violin. Through this violin he made the friendship of the orchestral director of the Stadt Theater, who allowed him to beat the drum, and who in other ways became his friend. Then Neuendorff found himself director of the chorus, and included among the second fiddles; and then, in succession, he became concert-meister and assistant director.

He did everything to earn a living—even fiddling at balls and dances; and while he was beating a drum, he earned the munificent salary of one dollar and fifty cents a week. Versatility must have been his dominant characteristic, for we note that, in 1857, under the tutelage of Dr. Gustav Schilling, he played the piano so well that he was featured on programmes as the fourteen-year-old prodigy.

Neuendorff's experience at the Academy of Music is part of operatic history. It was he who first introduced "Lohengrin" and also "Die Meistersinger" to American audiences. In fact, German Opera under his direction had a hearing long before it was given at the Metropolitan Opera House.* The German Theatre, in

* See "Chapters of Opera," Krehbiel.

accord with the Continental idea, was in the habit of including much music in the year's repertory. This had been the custom at the Stadt Theater, and when Neuendorff opened his own Germania Theater, on the present site of Tammany Hall,* he continued the policy. He was wise in beginning carefully, for he had competitors in the field in the persons of Haman and Rosenthal.

He labored under many disadvantages when he opened in 1872. As he himself declared: "In the first period of the German Theatre, we had to battle with all kinds of obstacles, inasmuch as the depth of the stage carried only three 'Kulissen,' and the entrances and exits were only possible from one side. Hence it was that the alternations of these entrances and exits had to be figured out constantly during the intermissions between the acts. Once, it happened that Merton was late, arriving after the curtain had risen on the first act. In order to reach his wardrobe, he had to walk across stage during performance; but how to do so without attracting attention was the question. We were giving at the time the 'Spitzen Königin,' and the first act scene was a restaurant.

* In fact, part of the old stage is still standing in the building now on Fourteenth Street.

Merton went to the buffet on the stage, drank a cognac, and then walked off to the dressing-room. In the second season, everything was different; we had a double depth of stage. To make this change, we were forced to break through a wall, and to take out not less than fifty-three thousand bricks."

The opening season was a brilliant one. It is well to mention those whom Neuendorff* engaged, for the list includes many people who were afterward to be associated with Heinrich Conried. There were Scherenberg, Einecke, Keszler, Witt, Merton, Collmer, Weinacht, Hirsch, Weisheit, von Ernest, Ravené, Schäffer, Schröder, Schmitz, Hübner, Gilbert, Hirsch-Podolska. Among the "guests" may be named Bernhard Rank, Franz Kierschner, Mathilde Cottrelly, H. Raberg, Franz Rainau, Max Freeman, Carl Schönfeld, Mühlbach-Mundt, Urban, Rackowitz, Grieben, Sauer, Necker, Bensberg, Carl Hauser, Panzer, Kahler, Georgine von Januschowsky, Magda Irschick, Kathi Schratt, and Marie Seebach.

* Neuendorff's final failure was largely due to the shallowness of his repertoires. For he relied too much upon farces. Also there was a rival in the Thalia Theater. In 1881, Neuendorff gave up. He went over to the Star Theatre, but his career there was short-lived, inasmuch as he surrendered that house to Lester Wallack in 1883. His last venture proved even more of a failure. He became Director, in 1885, of the McKee Rankin Third Avenue Theatre, and kept open only a fortnight.

According to Mr. Abrecht, Conried's name appears in the *Staats-Zeitung* for the first time on August 4, 1878. The occasion was an announcement, in the theatrical columns, of the fact that Heinrich Conried, engaged to direct dramas and comedies at the Germania Theater, was himself a capable character actor. In the same paper, for September 22 of that year, his first appearance in the part of *Gringoire* was discussed. So well was his work in "Die Räuber" liked, that it was not an unusual thing for him to be called before the curtain many times. All critics commented on his superior method of reading poetry. He also won favor as *Dr. Klaus*. But it seems that he chafed even here; not enough power was given him. The truth seems to be that Conried was overconfident of his powers, and had the starring bee in his bonnet. No wonder, therefore, that, in 1880, he was touring the country at the head of a German company, visiting such cities as Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati and Detroit. It was probably on this tour that he began to speak English.

In those days it was difficult for him to make both ends meet; therefore, any occupation along his line that came his way was not beneath Conried. One of his ventures at this time

seems never to have amounted to much; it was, nevertheless, in accord with the pride uppermost in his nature. This was his musical management of Bronislaw Huberman, the violinist. But the engagement did not add to his wealth. Nevertheless, his personality was winning him many friends; he was cultivating some of the most wealthy of the German citizens—those who were later to prove of such value to him.

A personal touch may be added to our narrative by allowing Madame Cottrelly to speak in reminiscence. As she ransacked her memory for incidents that took place at this time, as she tried to recall her association with Mr. Conried, her conversation was filled with color.

"Conried was a little man," she said, "hardly twenty when he was at the Bremen Stadt Theater. He stage-managed only for drama during his tenure, there being other directors for comedy and for light opera. In those days, Conried was all for tragedy; nothing else interested him; and, being extremely young, he found it difficult to adapt himself to character rôles. Besides which, he took no pains with what did not interest him. Often he was careless in his study of parts. As stage-manager, he was terribly exacting of others, but when it came his turn to be depended on, he gave no effort in return,

and resented being asked. That is what I found when he came to the Thalia Theater, which was under my management; a time arrived when my actors refused to work with him. The fault was a limitation in his character, which others were later to comment upon. Had Neuendorff been willing to present other than modern comedies, had he consented to satisfy the ambition of his youthful stage-manager by offering more classical dramas, the young man might have stayed with him longer, might, indeed have remained with him several seasons. For he was receiving two hundred dollars a month—a fairly good salary for the German Theater to give—a salary I gave him when he came to the Thalia.

“But Neuendorff persisted in his policy. Tuesdays alone were devoted to the standard plays. Conried’s voice was good, but, because of his physical defects, Neuendorff could not use him three-quarters of the time. Whatever his reasons for adopting his repertoires, and keeping them popular, the manager of the Germania Theater did not show great enthusiasm about his playhouse. In fact, he was hardly ever there; he was more interested in producing Wagner at the Academy of Music.

“Conried, then a bachelor, was living over

Fleischmann's bakery. It was in this way that he met his friend, Carl Herman, a wealthy German, and brother of Mrs. Fleischmann. Another wealthy German in this city was Mr. Bleier. These two men took an interest in Conried; his personality was such as to inspire in them great confidence as to his future. It can be easily realized how a person of Conried's nature and ambitions could conceive a plan in opposition to Neuendorff. After talking it over, these rich men, seen about Fleischmann's, agreed to back Conried, it being understood that he was to secure the theatre, while they would supply the money.

"It happened that Stetson's Fifth Avenue Theatre loomed up as the one house available. Conried's plan was to procure a large subscription as guarantee. These negotiations were all supposed to be carried on as a big secret, but, unfortunately for Conried, the matter got into the papers. I was then in California," continued Madame Cottrelly, "having been with Neuendorff two years previously.

"William Kramer, of the Atlantic Garden, had bought the Bowery Theatre, in the hopes that some day he would have a big Volks Theatre, with a brilliant repertory. He wanted me under contract with him, and, as Gustav Am-

berg had been my manager on my tour through the United States, it was through him that I was engaged by Kramer. In one day the contracts were drawn up and signed, the name of the theatre was changed from the Bowery to the Thalia, and I was on my way to Europe to engage talent for the first season. Amberg was to be the business-manager, while I was given entire control of the stage.

"I did not know Mr. Conried then; but, on the other hand, his backers in the new venture knew me, and they fully realized that in New York there was no room for three German theatres. I had a larger reputation in the community than Mr. Conried, and could boast of a valuable following. Herman and Bleier, therefore, advised Conried to make advances to his competitors, and manage in some way to ingratiate himself with Kramer. The outcome of the interview was that he expressed himself as willing to join the force I was then organizing. The young man had won for himself sufficient popularity to warrant my engaging him. He was not to be 'Ober-regisseur,' as he wished to be, for it was understood that I was the only 'Ober' in the organization. He remained with me one season, and was entirely satisfactory, even though unnecessarily severe

to those under him. What we did at the theatre during that period is recounted in the *German Revue*, which, about seven years ago, compiled a long history of the Thalia.

"Youthful Conried was very serious in those days; he had put a large and not unwarranted value upon himself. The audiences in the Bowery wanted comediettas, but Conried was loath to give them what they wanted. It was not to his artistic taste. While with me, he gave Schiller's 'Jungfrau von Orleans'; it was sumptuously mounted, and ran for two weeks. Seventy 'supers' disported themselves on the stage in silver armor. In outward glamor, the production was reminiscent of the Burg Theater, but such productions were so expensive they could only be given once in a long while. Alas! the classics did not make money in the German Theatre.

"During my second year," said Madame Cottrelly, "Conried went West on a starring engagement. Then the third year arrived, and his backers bought my interests in the Thalia for five thousand dollars. In the spring of 1881, Conried, Herman and Amberg came into possession of the theatre. Their first real success was with 'The Merry War.'

"Our paths were to cross many times after

that. For instance, there was a period when I controlled in America the contracts for all German comedies and operas. Among Mr. Conried's papers there may still be in existence some letter-heads of the firm of Goldmark, Cottrelly & Conried. I was no business woman in those days, and soon found myself overclouded by my partners. They were brushing me aside. My own professional duties were taking up a large part of my time. The last actual business relation I had with Mr. Conried was while I was singing in the McCaull Opera Company, during our Casino engagement in the fall of 1883. Oftentimes I remember that I was enabled to negotiate with McCaull for operas Goldmark and Conried wished to sell, and on many occasions, when they were hard pressed, I obtained advance payments for them on the gamble that they might have some money-making importation next season which McCaull would want to produce. For McCaull at that time was giving summer opera at Wallack's.*

*The relations of a business nature which existed between McCaull and Conried must have been satisfactory, if letters are to be believed:

December 7, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR: I have just learned of your departure for Europe with a view to perfecting arrangements in regard to the future control of German works in America. In saying "Good-bye," I take great pleasure in emphasizing that in all my relations



CONRIED AS A CHARACTER ACTOR

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"As I remember him, Mr. Conried was always preoccupied off the stage; his enemies were those he least suspected, and, strange to say, most prominent among them was himself. For his imperious manner made people dislike him. I have pictures of him with most loving inscriptions written upon them. I have been in his presence when he was up to the most delightful pranks. But he could so easily forget you! This was largely due to the fact that, when he became engrossed in one particular thing, he forgot everything else. I have seen him promise to give people seats for a night's performance, and, when they arrived, say, almost rudely, that there was no free list! He was lacking in those small courtesies which people like. Shall we say that his actions were the results of thoughtlessness? After he became Director of the Opera House, I was able to be of service to him once more. He was giving 'Fledermaus,' the book of which had

with you, either of a business or a personal nature, I have ever found you to be a courageous gentleman, and a correct, upright business man, your word being your bond in both relations. I shall look forward to a continuance of our present felicitous relations with anticipation of both profit and pleasure. Wishing you Godspeed,

I am, my dear Conried,

Sincerely yours,

JNO. A. MCCAULL.

For a cartoon of McCaull, see *The Theatre* (N. Y.), July 27, 1887, p. 247.

never been published. Fortunately, I had a copy, and I remember Herman's coming for it. Taking it all in all, I think Mr. Conried was an interesting and a very earnest man. I knew him first when he possessed genius far above his age, and even then one might have prophesied that he would reach the exalted position in the managerial world he afterward attained."

Herman's father had been a regimental surgeon in the Austrian army, and, in the '60's, was physician to the Conried family. As a boy, therefore, Conried was known to Herman. In later years the two often exchanged reminiscences of those days. Herman himself had been a former lieutenant in the Austrian army. He was a noted horseman, much to the discomfort of Conried, who, at one time, took morning rides in the Park with his partner. Conried would not be daunted, and, though he had not ridden much to speak of for years, he would not now confess it to Herman. One morning they were well on a country road; Conried's horse began to trot. When he could stand it—or rather sit it—no longer, he looked about him for means of escape. Passing a tree, with a stout branch not far overhead, he made a reach for the limb, caught it, and raised himself from

the saddle. "Go along!" he cried, as the horse shot from under him; "I've had enough for one day."

Conried was in partnership with Herman until the spring of 1883, after which he devoted himself to the play-brokerage business which Madame Cottrelly has mentioned. Gustav Amberg continued his relations with the Thalia Theater, and, while under Conried's artistic guidance, a season of operettas was inaugurated. Conried was in a position to do this, for he was beginning to bring over to America all the operatic works of the Viennese composers. Both Conried and Amberg have claimed the honors of first introducing to New York some of the best known German actors. Conried doubtless thought himself largely instrumental in inducing Sonnenthal, Barnay, Gallmeyer, Niemann-Rabe, and Mitterwurzer* to come to America. Amberg asserts that he was responsible for their coming. Whatever the situation, it is well to record that at this time Conried became personally associated with these players. In fact, some of the best acting in the history of the German theatre occurred during these

* An account of Mitterwurzer, known among his friends as "the nervous man," can be found in Freund's "Music and Drama," March 20, 1886.

early years. In the second season of the Thalia, Geistinger arrived.* The whole city wondered at her versatility; she could play farce, serious drama, and comedy in succession, and then make a great success in operetta. People from Fifth Avenue flocked to the Bowery. They revelled in her "Grozherzogin von Geroldstein," her "Boccaccio," "Therese Krones," "Näherin," "Cameliendame," and her "Donna Diana." These plays exhibited her striking versatility. Having come over with a guarantee of eighteen thousand dollars, she returned to Vienna with fifty thousand dollars instead, Cottrelly having earned as much, some historians claim, so exceptional were the profits.

While Conried was in artistic charge of the Thalia, his operetta success was unusual in New York. But, in spite of the fact that the house cleared seven hundred dollars daily, at the end of the season there was a deficit of some forty thousand dollars. Rumor claims that Herman lost nearly one hundred thousand dollars in his first managerial splurge with Conried. Such is the hazard of the theatre business. Conried had himself made nothing out of the venture.

* According to Amberg, Geistinger played at the Thalia with Cottrelly; then went to the Star Theatre. At the age of sixty-two, she was at the Germania Theater, on Eighth Street.

During 1883, he was one of the teachers in a Mrs. Froehlich's private school, 20 East 50th Street, and in addition he was coaching people in private theatricals. I have been told by those who knew him at the time, that his pride often went so far as to make him refuse pay for his services as theatrical coach. Once a wealthy lady, indebted to Conried for such services, sent him, in token of appreciation, a handsome bronze. Immediately he had the present valued, and sent the equivalent back in flowers.

In 1881-82, Amberg and Herman ran the Thalia Theater together; then Amberg resigned for a season, only to return in 1883. He remained until 1888, when he went over to the Irving Place Theatre. There were many legal disputes between Conried and Amberg—large and small ones—but time has effaced them, and they are not significant in the history of the German Theatre. Those who are in the play-broker business are obliged to conflict; there are legal complications in every trade.

"I shall never forget," said Mr. Amberg, "the day Conried came and tried to scare us into giving up the Thalia Theater idea, so that he might have free swing. I remember, when he called on me that morning, he wore a stove-pipe hat, and flaunted red kid gloves—very

much the German actor. He told me all about his subscription plans, and declared that over forty thousand dollars had been subscribed. He returned three days after, with the only proposal left him. 'I will give up my theatre idea,' he said, 'if you will give me a job.' I recollect that his first appearance under our management was in Schiller's 'Kabale und Liebe.' One night, while we were giving 'The Robbers,' he forgot a long speech, and the curtain had to be rung down right in the middle of a scene. During those days, Conried could always be found at the Progress Club on Sundays, playing poker. He was still very much the German, and ever the superior person. He fretted to see anyone above him, and he was always planning to free himself of others. In those early days, I recollect the friends who used to gather at Fleischmann's for luncheon, Conried the centre of conversation. Jonas, the architect, was there, as were Herman, Bleier, and Fleischmann. The latter's family was very close to Conried. Mrs. Udo Brachvogel, whose husband was dramatic critic for the *Staats-Zeitung*, was a relative of Louis Fleischmann, and saw much of Conried. It was during the Thalia association that Mr. Sperling's daughter first became known to Conried, and

it was not long after their meeting, it seems to me, that I heard of their engagement."

The firm of Goldmark & Conried began business in the early '80's. Goldmark was the elder man of the two, and had come into competition with Conried in Vienna, where they were both working along the same theatrical lines. The clash was not so insuperable that it prevented each from making overtures to the other, and the result was a partnership. One of the silent members of the concern was Carl Herman,* and the organization existed up to 1893-94. Into their office, which was on West 42d Street, near Fifth Avenue, there came likewise Emanuel Lederer, who, though separate from them, lent his experience to Conried, and often worked with him on particular deals.

Mr. Lederer had met Conried in Germany during the Berlin days in the '70's. Again the two had crossed paths when Conried, in 1881, went to Berlin to engage actors for the Thalia Theater. From 1889 to 1891, Lederer was a constant visitor at Conried's house. He is, therefore, able in memory to recall the manager-actor in poverty and prosperity.

To-day there are many evidences of the old

* Jenny Stubl, a soubrette from the Friedrich Wilhelm Stadt Theater, was, for a while, under the management of Herman and Conried. She eventually committed suicide.

régime in the same office; Herman's name is still on the door, and the selfsame old-fashioned furniture recalls an atmosphere of the old firm. But Mr. Lederer is the only one in possession.

During his activity as play-broker, Conried never gave up his managerial ambitions. In March, 1888, during the month of the famous New York blizzard, he presented Barnay at the Academy of Music, and then entered into an arrangement with Amberg,* whereby his "star" might play with Possart and Gertrude Giers at the Thalia. Conried and Barnay † were always bickering, and relations between them reached such a state at one time that, while Barnay was on tour, he left Conried in the lurch, and the latter was obliged to take his "star's" place in the company. The quarrel was finally cleared up, and it must have been particularly satisfying for Conried to prove to his rival that he could do very well without him. For, during the tour, which Conried finished

* Niemann-Raabe was under Conried at the Star Theatre, playing in opposition to Amberg at the Thalia. Though Possart came several times to this country, he was not under Conried's direct management, according to Amberg. Yet I have a contract for the year 1902. For pictures, see *Theatre Magazine* (N. Y.), January 23, 1888, frontispiece and p. 533. Article by Gertrude Norman, *Theatre Magazine*, May, 1905.

† An account of Ludwig Barnay may be found in the *Neuer Theater Almanach*, p. 53.

out, he met with unexpected success. So attractive was he as *Dr. Klaus* and as *Franz Moor*, that the financial returns were large. In Chicago and St. Louis, especially, business was far above expectations. Whatever profits the firm of Goldmark & Conried made were tied up in these managerial ventures. So varied were the activities of Heinrich Conried, after he left the *Thalia*, that his interests overlapped; the one involved the other. Amberg states that the reason he was appointed to a position as stage-manager for Rudolph Aronson at the new Casino Theatre was that, as play-broker, he possessed a monopoly of those Viennese operettas Aronson most desired. But it is likewise as true that, as a stage-manager, Conried had gained for himself considerable reputation. "He used to quarrel with the big people in the company," someone told me, "but with the 'supers' he was positively a genius. It was with his chorus at the Casino that he again won comment."

In the office of Goldmark & Conried we note those forces working which pointed toward the Metropolitan Opera House, for it was with this firm that the first Wagner contracts were made. Indeed, after Conried's Casino experience, when he formed an opera company for himself, he

tried to make arrangements with Colonel Stanton, then Impresario, to rent the Metropolitan for a season of light opera.

Let us examine each of these overlapping interests in its turn, therefore, and, since Conried's play business was so largely musical, it is well to see what his letter-books of the period record. The index indicates correspondence with Modjeska, McCaull, Helen Dauvray, Fanny Davenport, Rose Coghlan, Rudolph Aronson, Augustin Daly, and Daniel Frohman—mostly relating to German manuscripts, and written in a surprisingly obsequious tone. But these letters also show the keen business qualities uppermost in Heinrich Conried; in no transaction was he ever blind to future possibilities. The tone of his correspondence is direct; he showed no doubt as to what he wanted.

To Emma Abbott he wrote, August 28, 1886:

DEAR MADAM:

I have seen in several New York papers that, among the novelties to be produced by you next season, you announce "The Queen of Sheba," in English. I beg to call your attention to the fact that the right of producing this opera in English, or in any other language, is

solely and entirely vested in me, and that it would be an infringement of my rights were you to produce it without previous arrangement with me. While I fully intend to protect my property, I shall be most happy to enter into negotiations with you.

To Fanny Davenport, on the same day, he wrote:

DEAR MADAM:

I take great pleasure in submitting to you the synopsis of the German drama which I mentioned to you. I enclose a slip from the *Berlin Courier*, one of the most prominent German daily papers published in Berlin, relating to the first production of the play. Richard Voss's four-act drama, "Alexandra," was produced last night for the first time. . . . The author treats the question of whose guilt is the greater: the seducer or seduced. Some of the incidents are represented in perhaps too realistic a light. To produce striking effects at the close of each act has been the author's endeavor. He offers us very strong food, and it requires strong nerves to accept it. The artistic working-out of his idea is deserving of high admiration.

It was in 1886 that Conried became deeply

involved in an enterprise known as the Conried Opera Company, and I give here a letter which may be taken as his first official communication with the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company. It is dated September 14th:

GENTLEMEN :

I beg leave to make the following application to your Board. I would like to hire the Metropolitan Opera House for three or five consecutive years, during the period from the closing of your regular winter season until the opening of the next following fall season. It is my intention to give comic opera in a style surpassing anything that has been shown along that line in this country. I shall begin with an orchestra of forty musicians—no comic opera company that has ever played in New York (including the Casino) has had more than twenty-two to twenty-four. I shall have a chorus of not less than sixty of the best voices that can be had in this city; my cast of principals will include some of the best foreign and American artists. I can refer, with justifiable pride, to the productions that have been presented under my personal direction at the Thalia Theater, and at the Casino, including "Merry War," "Apajune," "Haunted Castle," "Nanon," "Amori-

ta," "Gypsy Baron," etc. As I am the sole owner, in this country, of the greatest successes in comic opera that have been produced of late years, such as the "Queen's Lace Handkerchief," "Prince Methusalem," "Merry War," "Gypsy Baron," etc., by Strauss; "Beggar Student," "Black Hussar," "Vice-Admiral," etc., by Milloecker; "Trip to Africa," "Bellman," etc., by Suppé; "Nanon," "Royal Middy," etc., by Genée; "Amorita," etc., by Czibulka . . . and all new operas by other distinguished composers; and as I have contracts, running for five years to come, with all the above-named gentlemen for their new works, I have a larger repertoire at my command than any other manager in America. I have discussed with your secretary, Mr. E. C. Stanton, many of the details of my scheme, and have no doubt he will give you all the information you desire before communicating with me directly.

Your obedient servant,

HEINRICH CONRIED.

Conried was right in regard to the contracts he was making at this period.* I have them

* Among these contracts I find the following names: Sigmund Sauberman, Dr. Fal. von Werther, Johan Brandl, Herman Zumpe, Max Woolf, Hugu Wittmann, Grafen F. E. Wittgenstein, Josef Weinberger, Camille Walzel, Richard Voss, Leon Tryptone, Heinrich Thalbot, Robt. Misch and Wilhelm Jacoby, Raoul Mader

all and they fill a small trunk. He was in contact with the whole Viennese musical world. His most important agreements were with Milloecker, Suppé, M. West and Genée, Carl Zeller and Leo Held, Victor Leon and Alfred Zamara, who wrote "Der Doppelgänger," Franz Kratz, and Strauss.

Franz von Suppé's general contract covered the rights to nineteen operas. Sometimes the arrangement was for a stipulated period; at other times, as in the case of "Africareise," there was an absolute sale. I find a personal memorandum from Richard Genée, dated June 8, 1886, regarding his "Nanon." It reads:

"I certify that I sold to Director Conried all receipts and incomes which have been and in the future may be collected from American theatres, . . . except New York City."

The contract with Suppé for his comic opera, "Bellman," is typical of many of the arrangements made with other composers. Conried agreed to pay Suppé 3,000 florins, one-half on completion of the first act. He had the privilege to sell rights to others and to keep the royalty accruing therefrom for himself.

and Bernhard Buchbinder, Josef Konti, Josef Bayer, Wilhelm Ascher, Julius Bauer, and Alfons Czibulka. He had much more trouble with his foreign agents than with the composers these agents secured for him.

He also had the right to deal in the piano score for the whole world. For this concession Conried paid 5,000 Austrian florins. Such was the business carried on by Goldmark & Conried's Authors and Composers' International Agency.*

The following letter, dated January 24, 1887, reinforces Madame Cottrelly's recollections:

TO RUDOLPH ARONSON, Esquire.

DEAR SIR:

I beg to inform you that I have received the complete manuscripts of the latest Vienna novelties and successes, "Vice-Admiral," by Milloecker; "Pirates," by Genée; "Hofnarr," by Adolph Müller; and "Vagabond," by Carl Zeller; and shall be glad to enter into negotiations with you respecting their performances by your company.

A similar note was sent to McCaull at the same time. That he was ever alert as to his rights is seen from the following tart letter forwarded, on February 18, 1887, to George W. Lederer:

I herewith give you notice that I shall have you arrested on your return to New York City,

* For an account of Strauss, Milloecker and Suppé, see Freund's "Music and Drama," Christmas number, 1885, p. 22.

for having stolen my property, the operetta, "The Maid of Belleville," and for giving illegal and unauthorized performances of it.

Evidently his scheme for comic opera was dominant in his mind, for, when the Metropolitan Opera House offer fell through, he approached Augustin Daly, in the hope that he could lease Daly's Theatre for the summer season of 1887.

Summer opera was quite the fashion in New York then. McCaull's Wallack venture was noted. There he presented Digby Bell, DeWolf Hopper, Mathilde Cottrelly, and Marie Jansen, in pieces of such picturesque character as "Don Cæsar."

One of the most significant contracts owned by the Conried Company was that made by Goldmark in 1886 with the Wagner family. The firm collected royalties from 1886 to 1888, receiving four per cent. of the gross receipts, and certainty for the boxes. Over this contract there was some difficulty with Director Stanton of the Metropolitan, in 1889.*

That Conried's reputation was growing is evident from the fact that, during the summer

* As to Stanton's opera ideals, see his article in the *North American Review* for February, 1892. For McCaull's ventures, see Robert Grau's "Forty Years Observation of Music and Drama."

of 1885, Edwin Booth intimated to Mr. Emanuel Lederer, who had been his stage-director while touring on the Continent, that he would not be loath to go abroad again* if he could have Conried as his business-manager.

Among Mr. Conried's papers, I find the following note, pencilled on a slip of paper:

DEAR MR. BOOTH:

I will take only a *few* minutes of your time. I come as Commissioner of the International Musical and Theatrical Exhibition to be held in Vienna, May to October next.

Very truly,

H. CONRIED.

On the back of this in an uncertain hand, is the reply:

Ill-health compels me to refuse all interviews on business, and I must ask to be excused.

E. BOOTH.

The International Musical and Theatrical Exhibition, held in Vienna from May to October, 1892, sought to show, in its infinite variety, the development of music and drama among all nations and during all ages. A pamphlet was

* Lederer had been with Booth, when the latter was in Germany in 1883. Booth then played in English; the rest of the company in German. On the wall in the office of Mr. Lederer there is a framed testimonial letter from the actor.

issued for distribution, and if it does not reflect in its language the sentimental hand of Conried, it at least reflects the tenor of the German mind toward the theatre. As a document, it has its interest, for it is a measure of the high seriousness with which the Continental public approached and still approaches the playhouse. Intelligent appeal was made by the Princess Metternich, who first conceived the plan of the Exhibition. Mr. Conried, as a representative in America, was deeply intent on his mission.

It was evidently about the time of the mammoth Wallack benefit that Conried must have offered the services of his company, for I find an undated letter, addressed from Wallack's Theatre, as follows:

Pray convey to your accomplished artists, and accept for yourself, my warm appreciation of the kind, generous, and sympathetic offer conveyed in your letter.

I cannot express in words my deep sense of the noble compliment. I will (with your permission) send word to Messrs. Daly and Palmer, who, I am sure, will greatly appreciate your kindness.

Very sincerely yours,

LESTER WALLACK.

Even though Heinrich Conried possessed small musical education when he was appointed Director of the Metropolitan Opera House, he had had considerable musical experience in the field of light opera. His handling alone of the works of the principal Viennese composers would have afforded him opportunity for picking up some knowledge of music, and his further experience as stage-manager at the Casino Theatre would have added still more to his surety.

Previous to his acceptance of Rudolph Aronson's offer, which was soon to follow, he had had one more managerial venture. In 1885, Sonnenthal consented to visit America, provided a security of sixteen thousand dollars was offered him. Sixteen performances were to be given in the fortnight, and he was to be handed the cash before sailing. Conried asked Amberg to back him, and the latter persuaded Kramer to give security.

Whatever might be said to the contrary, there is no doubt that Conried was in personal correspondence with the greatest of German actors. For Sonnenthal wrote to him from Vienna, on March 18, 1884, as follows:

Why did I hesitate so long, since you of-

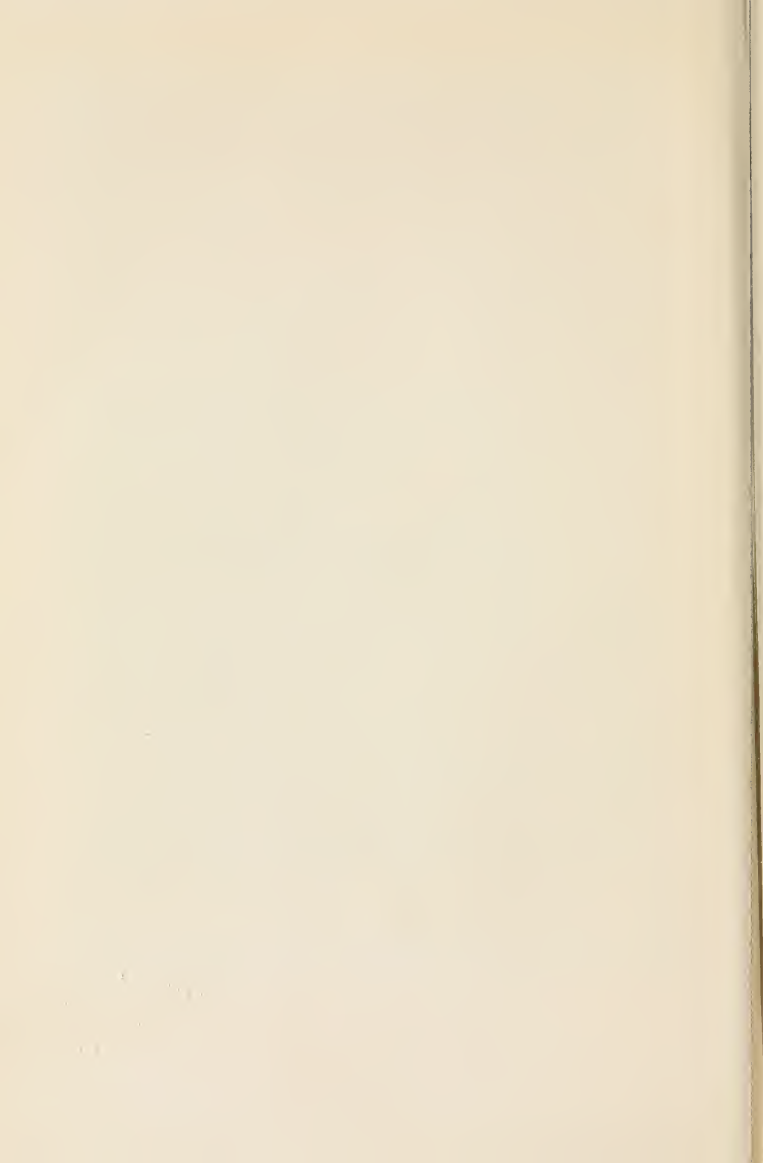
ferred me even then a brilliant pecuniary success? You know me; in spite of the fact that I like to make money and must earn it, I have always aimed primarily at the artistic success. To be candid, I had some distrust of the fashion in which Art is handled over there [meaning America]—but now that you offer to me the coöperation of an efficient cast, and especially since I have seen Edwin Booth, and have had an opportunity to admire this unsurpassed master, I realize that there is in America, as in Europe—that there is in the whole world—but one true Art. And as this master showed the warmest consideration of my work, I determined to take the step, and I signed the agreement. And now, *vogue la galère!* But once more, dearest friend, see that you have an efficient cast; for, God be thanked, I am not one of those stars as yet who wish to shine alone; I have always had the entirety of a piece of work in view, aside from the fact that an artist can only profit by the coöperation of a truly artistic cast.

I am very sorry that, for want of time, I shall not be able to spend some days in London to see the famous Wilson Barrett, who is said to fill all the world with enthusiasm as *Claudian* right now. I wonder whether or not he will



Stamm und Geburt *W. Sonnenthal* *Post (Lancet)*
2. in London *W. Sonnenthal* *in London 1884*
W. Sonnenthal *1903*

ADOLPH SONNENTHAL



come to us; to be sure, he would meet with equally as enthusiastic response as Booth. But I do not lose hope of seeing him on my return journey.

And now farewell. I trust to see you in September; you must tell me very, very much about things over there; for, to be honest, since I saw Booth, my heart misgives me somewhat.

Au revoir, then, and kindest regards from

Yours very sincerely,

A. SONNENTHAL.

The very voluminous correspondence that passed between Mr. Conried and Herr Sonnenenthal was mainly centered on the consideration of his repertoire which, during the several visits he paid to America, was of a most extensive and varied character.

As Amberg's agent, Conried was allowed the generous commission of twenty-five per cent. Before Sonnenenthal arrived, every seat was sold for his engagement—an engagement which was a strenuous one for the actor, who had no time whatsoever in which to see anything of New York.* While here, he lived with Baron de

* An interview with Sonnenenthal is to be found in the N. Y. *Staats-Zeitung*, Vol. 54, No. 13, p. 3. See article on Sonnenenthal by Helena Richter in the "Deut. Shakespeare-Gesellsch. Jahrb.," Berlin, 46, pp. 130-140. See also "Adolph Sonnenenthal," by Julius Bruck. For the 1899 engagement, Conried issued "Eine Fest-

Grimm, cartoonist for the New York *Herald*. So successful was the venture that Conried himself cleared twelve thousand five hundred dollars.

His business relations with Amberg were now varied, inasmuch as the latter, at the Thalia Theater, was giving creditable performances of Milloecker's "Der Feldprediger," Genée's "Nanon," Weber's "Der Freischütz," Milloecker's "Der Bettelstudent," Suppé's "Boccaccio" and "Fatinitza," and all the other operas controlled by Conried's firm. No account of opera in New York could be written that did not regard the season of 1885-86 at the Thalia, where audiences were being familiarized with Strauss's "Die Fledermaus" and Mozart's "Die Hochzeit des Figaro," and where Strauss's "Der Zigeunerbaron" was given its *première*.*

Maybe Rudolph Aronson was wise in "cornering" Conried. For, in their short association, there was found in the stage-manager something more than the mere music-broker. The Casino Theatre opened to the New York public, in an unfinished state, on October 21, 1882. "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief" was the

schrift zu seinem Gastspiel am Irving Place Theater" (29 pp.). During the 1885 engagement, Conried received a letter from Edwin Booth, discussing Sonnenthal's acting.

* See Krehbiel's lists, and opera reviews at the time.

opera, and in the cast were Mathilde Cottrelly and Francis Wilson. "In the early eighties," writes Mr. Aronson,* "with the inauguration of the Casino, I insisted upon a production that should combine a first-class cast, a good-looking and vivacious chorus, a complete orchestra, appropriate scenery, costumes and properties, resultant in the presentation of Johann Strauss's 'The Queen's Lace Handkerchief,' and thus establishing the popularity and vogue for many years in America of operetta by Austrian composers, and the performances of not only the works of Strauss, but those of Suppé, Milloecker, Czibulka, presented by the McCaull, the J. C. Duff, the Henry W. Savage, the F. C. Whitney, the Amberg, and the Conried Opera Companies."

In succession, the Casino performances included "Le Grand Casimir," "The Sorcerer," "The Princess of Trebizonde," "The Merry War," "Falka," "The Little Duke," "The Beggar Student," "Nell Gwynne," "Prince Methusalem," "Apajune," "Patience" (first performance), "The Pirates of Penzance," "Die Fledermaus," "Polly," and "Billee Taylor."

* See Rudolph Aronson's "Theatrical and Musical Memoirs." N. Y.: Nast & Company, 1913. An account and a cartoon of Aronson may be found in *The Theatre*, Dec. 25, 1886, p. 277. See also Freund's "Music and Drama," July 17, 1886.

The audiences were quick to make favorites of Francis Wilson, Lillian Russell, Madelaine Lucette, Digby Bell, Marie Jansen, and DeWolf Hopper.

I have not been able, absolutely, to locate the exact time Mr. Conried assumed his duties at the Casino. A letter to the Directors of the Metropolitan, in the light of the actual performances given at the Casino, would suggest an earlier date than 1885. There are some of his friends who insist that he had a hand in producing "The Beggar Student," "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," "Boccaccio," "Nanon," "Amorita," "Apollo," "Poor Jonathan," "The Gypsy Baron," and "The King's Fool." *

On the evidence of Aronson's "Memoirs," † Mr. Conried entered the Casino with "Nanon." The former writes: "Immediately following 'Billee Taylor,' Zell and Genée's 'Nanon' was produced under my own management. 'Nanon' was staged by Mr. Heinrich Conried, who afterward became Director of the Metro-

* Mr. Richard Conried assures me that his father was the stage-director, to his knowledge, for all of these, except, probably, "Amorita" and "Apollo."

† For a synopsis of the work done at the Casino Theatre during the Aronson régime, see T. Allston Brown's "History of the New York Stage." For casts and lists of operas, and profits at the Casino, see Aronson's book.

politan Opera House, and it achieved great success. It was followed by other successes, Czibulka's 'Amorita,' and Strauss's 'Gypsy Baron,' which also were staged by Mr. Conried in a most sumptuous manner."

That seemed to be his long suit,—the sumptuousness of his stage. But he always added to his productions a touch of genius that spells success, like the professional fencing contests for prizes, in "The King's Fool." When "Nanon" was presented, on June 29, 1885, it did not, however, make the furor expected of it; people seemed to like the libretto better than the music, even though there was that striking aria, "Nanon, In Rapture I Come to Thee." Sadie Martinot, Pauline Hall, and Francis Wilson were in the cast.

"I was regarded as the rebellious member of the company, I guess," said Mr. Wilson, talking of those days. "Traditionally, Mr. Conried was thorough; those ideas which he had imbibed as an actor in Germany were paramount with him. One of these was regarding rehearsal. He found America free and easy, and I was a little freer and easier than that even. We Americans in the company rebelled against his formalities as persistently as he did against our freedom. I

remember once, we rehearsed 'Nanon' until seven in the evening. I had a comparatively small part, and when I was through with it, inasmuch as I was to sing in 'Erminie' the same evening, I went home to rest; that much, it seemed to me, I owed my audience. But Mr. Conried thought otherwise; he was hurt that a member of his company should show such insubordination. He never quite forgave me for breaking camp; and I found that he expected the whole company to remain until the end. Years later, when he was in Chicago, with his Metropolitan Opera Company, he had occasion to mention this incident, and held me high for ridicule. To him I was ever a law-breaker.

"At rehearsal, the actor in him was always uppermost. He was a tremendous poseur, and a worker thoughtless of others. He would act every one's parts, exhausting them, but outwardly never seeming exhausted himself. I believe he never realized that conditions in the American Theatre were not what they were in Germany; abroad, those actors rehearsing in the day are not obliged to play that night. But we did both at the Casino; there was no alternating of casts. Conried kept his people working so late that there was neither time

for food nor rest. But he would always go home, dress immaculately and theatrically, and return to the theatre, looking calm and unconcerned. During the evening he would faint behind the stage from sheer exhaustion. Yet it never occurred to him that his actors might feel the same physical strain.

"One day at rehearsal, the young leading man did not throw the proper passion into his scene. Conried brushed him aside, and acted it vigorously and with the necessary fervor. There is no doubt that Conried was an excellent stage-manager, but his sway was arbitrary, except when someone would oppose him arbitrarily, when he would weaken. He always wanted to be announced with a flare of trumpets. If, while on the stage, he happened to show any new piece of business, he would look around him consciously, to see how far it was taking effect. He was always very serious, and his expression was unfailingly tragic. It was his friendship with Aronson that made McCaull bitter against him at this time."

Mr. Wilson smiled at the recollection of things he did not tell. "Ah! those days! I have with me now a colored man who once was McCaull's jockey."

"Amorita," on November 16, 1885, was the

next Casino production.* It was the English version of Alphons Czibulka's "Pfingsten in Florenz," the book by Genée and Riegen. The translation was made by Sydney Rosenfeld and Leo Goldmark, and the piece was brilliantly mounted. Regarding Mr. Rosenfeld's association with Conried, an amusing anecdote is told by Judge Dittenhoefer. "I remember the time when Rosenfeld was restrained from producing 'The Black Hussar,' controlled by Conried. For contempt of court, he was remanded to the Ludlow Street Jail, and there he was unable to give bail. Conried, hearing this, paid the money for him!"

I have been told that Mr. Conried did not remain long with the Casino—possibly a little over a season. But, if dates are to be believed, it must have been longer. Aronson writes:

"In Milloecker's 'Poor Jonathan,' the third act was laid at West Point, on the Hudson. I said to Mr. Heinrich Conried, who had charge of the stage, 'We must introduce here an effective military march, and evolutions for the girls of the chorus, to be uniformed as West Point Cadets.' I wrote the music for this introduction, published as a march under the title, 'For

* See Freund's "Music and Drama," November 21, 1885; also Krehbiel's "Review of the N. Y. Musical Season," 1885-90.

Love or War.' It took eight weeks of incessant rehearsal with Mr. Conried and a prominent drill-master of one of New York's crack regiments, to teach the girls (forty-eight in number) the difficult steps."

This would lead us to infer that Mr. Conried was at the Casino in 1890, for the opera was presented on October 14th of that year. In the interim, between "Amorita" and this, there was given "The Gypsy Baron" (February 15, 1886).*

Unless Mr. Conried was called in by Aronson, there is still further confusion of dates. First and foremost, on February 17, 1890, "The King's Fool" was being played by the Conried Opera Company, at Niblo's Garden, with J. W. Herbert and Della Fox in the cast, this being the latter's first appearance in New York. Yet both Krehbiel and Aronson mention Conried's association in the merry war over the production of "Cavalleria Rusticana" on October 1, 1891.† This latter incident brought Hammerstein into clash with Conried for the first time in their musical histories. Mr. James

* Cartoon of "Gypsy Baron," in the N. Y. *Theatre*, March 29, 1886. The Casino programme contains Conried's name. See also Freund's "Music and Drama," Feb. 20, 1886.

† "Most Successful Operetta Ever Heard Here." By Rudolph Aronson. *Theatre Magazine*, Ill. July, 1903, p. 17.

Creelman was abroad, as correspondent for the New York *Herald*, when he first heard the prize opera, with its famous intermezzo. He notified Aronson of its Continental success. The little opera was brought over for production in a double bill, which included Zeller's "Tyrolean,"—a musical piece introducing in the chief rôle the trim person of Marie Tempest. Conried staged the double bill. Gustav Kerker directed. On the same evening, at the New York Lenox Lyceum, Hammerstein also gave "Cavalleria Rusticana," having tried to serve an injunction against Aronson. From Krehbiel's criticism, we infer that the Aronson performance was superior, for he declares that Hammerstein pitchforked the little opera upon his stage. Strange to say, Adolph Neuendorff directed the Hammerstein orchestra!

Recollections of those times were brought vividly to Mr. Conried's mind many years later, when he was in London. He and his son occupied a box at the theatre to see Marie Tempest. During one of the scenes, she discovered them sitting there, and in crossing stage began to hum faintly to herself one of the songs from the "Tyrolean." Such little sentiments make theatrical life worth while!

That Conried was very exacting as a stage-

director is indicated in the letters he wrote the actors who missed rehearsal; so successfully was he feared that they dared not disregard his wishes without some excellent excuse.

DEAR MR. CONRIED [wrote Lillian Russell]:

I am quite sick to-day, and feel too ill to get out of bed. If I could come to the rehearsal I would, but to be able to sing to-night I must rest in bed all day. Let us arrange Thursday at four to hear the opera ("Comtesse").

One of the actors brought forward by Conried at this time was Jefferson de Angelis. The two were continually quarreling over stage business, and over de Angelis's extempore additions made to the different scenes.

"But," said de Angelis, "I always discovered that he was right: for he was always artistic. He had an instinct for just the correct touch in those operettas at the Casino. In my opinion he was the greatest stage-manager of light opera we have ever had in this country. And although we disagreed sometimes, I know he liked me, for once, after a heated argument he slapped me on the back and said:

"Don't be angry, Angelis. I admire you very much. If I did not, do you think I would

put in all the stage business and things you have put into my manuscripts?"

"And he had a keen sense of humor," Mr. de Angelis continued. "He wore his hair quite long, and I could always get a smile out of him, when I ran my fingers through my own short crop, and called him 'Hair Conried.' His readiness to enter into a joke endeared him to all of us."

Conried kept a sharp eye on every detail. He never relaxed his vigilance, so desirous was he that everything should be as perfect as possible. Often, in after years, when he was at the Metropolitan, he would dress as one of the chorus and go about the stage, watching everyone and everything. Even in the Casino days he was given to that habit. On one such occasion, the irreverent de Angelis, passing him during some stage business, plucked off his wig and false beard. Conried, horror-stricken, darted off the stage in a fury, but by the time de Angelis made his exit, his anger had abated, and the two laughed heartily over the incident.

De Angelis tells another anecdote—this time turned on himself by Conried:

"Gus Kerker (our musical director) and I," so the story goes, "were invariably swapping cigars, which we claimed were the best in the

country, at the price. I had one made that had every appearance of being a genuine *Havana Perfecto*. But to tell the truth, it was filled with the parings of a horse's hoof. This cigar I presented to Kerker, asking him to smoke it, and to give me his candid opinion of its worth. I then went upon the stage.

"William Ponelte, knowing all about the joke, betrayed me to Kerker, who put the cigar in his pocket, and of course took good care not to smoke it. The following night I asked him how he liked the cigar, and he said he must have smoked it without realizing it was the one I had given him.

"I could say nothing, and therefore I allowed the matter to drop. A few evenings after, I was standing in a café, smoking a cigar. Conried came in and spoke to me. Suddenly he said, 'What is that you are smoking, de Angelis?' 'An onion,' I answered. 'What did you imagine it was?' 'Oh, smoke something good,' he said. With that he pulled my cigar out of my mouth, and threw it on the floor. Before I could say a word, he reached in his pocket and handed me a beautiful looking weed. I lighted it, and we chatted for a few moments. Two or three times he roared with uncontrollable laughter. When I asked him what amused him,

he told me it was something he was thinking about. Finally, he said he would have to go, and left me in a fit of laughter. He had no sooner gone than a volume of yellow and blue smoke burst from the cigar he had given me, and the café smelled like a blacksmith's shop. He had given me the cigar I had prepared for Kerker, and I never after that had an opportunity of getting even with him."

The young German manager attained the distinction of having a brand of cigars named after him, and these he was accustomed to distribute liberally, when he received the reporters on his departure to or arrival from Europe in later years.

One of the few anecdotes Conried used to tell in public concerned these cigars.

"When I was managing my production, 'The King's Fool,' " he said, "I occasionally had to jump in, on short notice, and play some part. The principal singers in that company were Joseph Herbert, the comedian, Della Fox, the soubrette, and Helen Bertram, the prima donna.

"One night we came to Peoria, and I, as usual, had to go on in place of one of the comedians, who was ill. After the performance, we proceeded to the bar of the little hotel, and the

proprietor came in to talk to us. He praised the opera, and was especially pleased with my performance. When we parted, I gave him a cigar.

"The next year we went back there, and after the performance, I met him again. He seemed not to have the slightest recollection of me.

" 'That's strange,' I said, 'don't you remember the man that acted in "The King's Fool?"'

"He shook his head.

" 'Why,' I said, 'I met you afterward, and gave you a cigar.'

"He shot a sudden glance at me, and immediately the friendly expression on his face changed.

" 'Oh, yes,' he answered, 'I'll never forget that cigar.' "

Several personal events had now happened in the life of Heinrich Conried. During the winter of 1884, he was married to Miss Augusta Sperling, a woman by temperament well fitted to him. On September 10, 1885, a son was born to them, and because this event occurred at the time when "Nanon" was being produced, the boy was named Richard Genée, after the composer. Rudolph Aronson was made the godfather of the child, on May 10, 1886, a date

famed for the production of "Erminie," the opera destined for so long a run.*

The year 1887 is chiefly marked by two events: Mr. Conried was awarded a medal for his artistic efforts, and he became a citizen of the United States, his certificate being dated October 17, 1887. Besides managing Barnay, in 1888, Hedwig Niemann-Raabe likewise made her American *début* at the Star Theatre under his direction. Her advent was more an artistic than a financial success. Her emotionalism was best seen in "Divorçons," "Dora," and Richard Voss's "Alexandra," a play which Conried had tried to dispose of to Fanny Davenport.

Then came the period of the Conried Opera Company, with its ups and downs in "The Gypsy Baron" and "The King's Fool." Once in a while this organization got into difficulties, at which time Conried's other business ventures had to come to his assistance. With this company he made a transcontinental trip.

He was by instinct a manager, ready at any

* Richard Conried was graduated from Columbia University, in 1908, having been active in college theatricals during his undergraduate life. His father did not wish him to go on the stage, however much his inclinations might lie in that direction. Nevertheless, had his father lived to see the New Theatre consummated, there is small doubt that Mr. Richard Conried would have entered theatrical life in an executive capacity. Instead of which, he became a member of the Stock Exchange. He was married on September 25, 1911, to Miss Margaret Levy.

moment for any undertaking. In 1891, the Arion Society of New York went to Vienna for a song festival. During the trip they would have found themselves stranded had it not been for Conried. The intercourse between Germany and America in those days was not close, especially in the musical world. But the Arion Society's trip up the Danube turned out to be a success. For his efforts, Mr. Conried was presented with a handsome ring.

Conried was now gaining distinct prestige among the Germans of New York; he was likewise making money, but from a source which was not the theatre. During the Thalia years, while he was travelling across seas for his actors, an idea came to him—they always came to Conried, who ever had a new scheme up his sleeve—that it would be profitable to furnish steamships with deck chairs. He was such a poor sailor that he was constantly on the lookout for comfort. There was scarcely a trip he made abroad that he was not the life of those aboard, however much he might be seasick. And though he loved to spend most of his time in the card-room, he was always approachable when the subject of the concerts for the seamen's benefit had to be discussed. Director Leist, of Bremen, could write a volume on Mr.

Conried as a sailor on the North German Lloyd boats. As though steamer chairs were not enough innovation for this theatre manager to make, he it was who tried to find some substitute for the evil-smelling oil lamps on the boats, long before the electric light was in use.

Conried talked with the General Director of the Hamburg-American line, Herr Ballin, who gave him a contract to supply chairs, and thus it was that the Ocean Comfort Company was formed. Conried was fortunate in striking a decided want in ocean traffic, and it was a business wherein large profit was to be made.

The very name of the organization indicates how careful Conried was to keep his name from business interests, other than of an artistic nature. The company thrived for many years; and long after rival steamers began to handle their own chairs, the German lines held to their contracts with Conried; for they considered, astutely, that Director Conried always had many people to send to Europe from the Irving Place Theatre. To-day the Ocean Comfort Company is no more. Every ship carries her own chairs. When Conried gave up the Irving Place Theatre, he sounded the knell to his other business. Contracts began to dwindle in value, and there came a time when renewals were

sought and refused, especially after the death of Mr. Conried. Rudolph Aronson was one of the stockholders in the company, which started business with one thousand chairs; in 1891, the number had increased to 5,250. In that year, a dividend of three per cent. was declared. The Ocean Comfort Company was Conried's most reliable backer in his theatrical enterprises.

He had now reached the point where he could command independent financial backing. Everything tended toward a larger position for him. The forces that had made his managerial ability distinctive so early in life were carrying him in the direction of the most considerable German playhouse in America—the Irving Place Theatre.

CHAPTER III.

THE IRVING PLACE THEATRE: German audiences in New York. Amberg; William Steinway. Policy of the theatre from 1893-97. Important productions; "guesting" engagements. Policy from 1897-1903. After 1903.

THE site for the Irving Place Theatre was in close proximity to the Steinway property, on Fourteenth Street, and this is one of the reasons why the house became the special care of William Steinway. The land had originally been occupied by a building known as Irving Hall, and used for lodgers. But, in 1888, that place was torn down, and, through the initial activity of Gustav Amberg, a theatre was built in its stead. This theatre was opened on Christmas, 1888, with a comedy entitled "Ein Erfolg."

During his managerial tenure, Amberg had many difficulties of a financial nature. He found himself, about 1890, in such a precarious position that he was forced to leave. Even the Munich players he had brought over, successful as they were at this time, did not save the manager; he soon went into bankruptcy. The

lease of the house was then turned over to Leo von Raven and Max Mansfield for the season of 1892-93. Again, the psychological moment arrived for Heinrich Conried. He was persuaded that he could bring the Irving Place Theatre to a successful position, and so, in 1892, an understanding was reached, between himself and William Steinway, to take over the lease. Mr. Steinway did not own the property—which belonged to the Crain estate,—but he did own the lease, and this he willingly turned over to the new manager.

With characteristic zeal and self-confidence, Conried once more concentrated his attention on the production of German drama. And he was so far successful that his régime at the Irving Place stands forth as his greatest accomplishment, even in the light of the later innovations made at the Metropolitan Opera House.

He assumed control, with a pronounced determination to discountenance the vicious "star" system which at that time dominated the American stage, and was to dominate it for several decades to come. It was not his intention to treat his audiences to a succession of popular idols, but he resolved rather to establish a consistently, evenly efficient stock company. This basic principle was responsible for much of the

astounding and unique reputation the Irving Place Theatre began to gain for itself. It became the one permanent theatrical organization in New York, standing for the traditions of true histrionic art, thoughtfulness, refinement, cultivation of form, subordination of the parts to the whole, submission—in short for everything opposed to the popular theatrical vogue.* He kept the organization constantly at an extraordinarily high level. Not often did one find the Irving Place Theatre company unequal to its task. Surveying the actual accomplishment, one can but marvel that there was not more evidence of haste than there was. Often the performances were brilliant; nearly always they were even in their artistic conception.

No contemporary manager diversified his performances as shrewdly as Conried. Of course his task was different from that confronting Mr. Daniel Frohman, who had a stock company at the old Lyceum Theatre, near Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue. Conried had a rich dramatic literature to cull from, and the German dramatists at that time meant more from a literary point of view than the American play-

* This opinion was expressed by one of Mr. Conried's friends, Mr. Peyton Steger, who was at work on a biography of the Impresario. Mr. Steger's sudden death occurred before the book was in any way completed.

wrights. Not only that, but the purposes of the two playhouses were different. Conried had the tradition of a repertory system well drilled into his being; otherwise his past experiences would have been as nought to him. And, as we have seen, his tastes were largely classical. He gave the German classics due place in his repertory, but he likewise took good care to amuse the German public with light comedies and farces—many of them often wholly unworthy of the excellent acting bestowed upon them.

He was eager for suggestions from his clientele. I have been told that, on one occasion, in order to please a theatre club, he changed his bill so that the members of the club might see a particular play they were anxious to discuss.

Never a season passed that Mr. Conried did not succeed in mounting two or three novel and striking plays. Every year he went abroad, not only in the interests of his musical ventures, but to ransack Germany and Austria for those European productions that were unlikely to be seen elsewhere. He was virtually responsible for everything connected with the executive and artistic direction of the Irving Place Theatre. The stage-management showed his own personal touch; he was always expert, and sometimes

daring. It was not long before he became known for perfection of detail in all his productions. And, after his first season, New York began to regard him as a most able, progressive, brilliant, and thoroughly artistic manager.

His stock company was always receiving new blood. Whenever he returned from Europe he had not only a list of new attractions to announce, but he would tell of the new and the mature players he had recruited from Germany and Austria. In accordance with the custom of the German theatre—a custom not strange to the history of the American theatre in stock company days—he established the excellent system of “guesting” engagements, a habit familiar to the Thalia Theater, and still memorable are the visits of Sonnenthal, Sorma, Barnay, Kainz, Helene Odilon, Engels, and Bonn. But though the “guest” generally proved a splendid attraction, Conried’s dependence was not upon such extraordinary arrangements; rather upon the all-round ability of his company. He trained his people to be ready any week to appear in half a dozen plays at the shortest notice. Sometimes the popularity of a drama forced him into a “run”; at other times, during a “guesting” engagement, he marshalled the best

of his company as support for a repertory belonging to the visiting actor.

He was ever vigilant in search for new material. The new playwrights,—Sudermann, Fulda, Bleibtreu, and Hauptmann,—were made familiar at the Irving Place Theatre before they were known to the English stage. Plays by these authors were brought out simultaneously in Berlin and in New York. And let it be emphasized that Conried was the first producer to pay royalties to French and German authors, who were not at that time protected by copyright in America.

In spite of his contemporaneousness, however, Heinrich Conried never forgot German literary tradition. No matter how brilliant the “new” product might be, no matter how distinctively presented, he never lost an opportunity to produce a classic. An annual Schiller festival was held by him, and this did much to endear Conried to the many sentimental, homesick Germans in New York at that period.

From the very outset, therefore, the Irving Place Theatre became unique, and synonymous with all that was artistic. People knew that they could depend on seeing really noteworthy plays. An evening spent there was in the way of an intellectual treat. And more than that, Con-

ried succeeded in unifying his German audiences. Night after night they came, until they began to regard themselves as one big family. They visited each other between the acts, and when the play was over, they went to Lüchow's for supper and to exchange opinions. Over the beer, of an evening, one could see the critic, the actor, and those interested in the welfare of the German theatre. It was as near the Continental idea as one could get in New York.

The Irving Place was not a theatre for the playgoer that Broadway knows. Yet, its policy won for it a following alike from the Germans and from the Americans. College students were advised by their instructors to frequent the house, and Conried did everything he could to coöperate with educational institutions. In fact, he was ever zealous to make of his theatre an intellectual centre. It became known throughout the country, and Conried was acclaimed in the most discriminating quarters as an example of what a theatre manager should be. While this pleased him, he found greater satisfaction in the knowledge that abroad he was gaining a European reputation. The activity of the Irving Place Theatre was carefully watched and applauded by the managers in Germany.

As I have said before, there was one great thing in Conried's favor at this time, and that was the unity of the German public in New York; they were not so assimilated into the American feeling as they are now. There was more in them of the spirit of '48. But, on the other hand, there is no doubt that Mr. Conried's own artistic personality gave stamp to the tone of the place. Had there not been that determination on his part to create a repertory consistent with the best that was being done in the repertory houses of Europe, the German Theatre in New York might have been given over almost wholly to that inferior grade of farce which occasionally found its way on the Irving Place Theatre stage. After Conried ceased being its Director, the history of his playhouse lost its glamour. There was not the distinction to it that there was of yore. In fact, during the year 1909, it looked as though New York would not be able to support a German Theatre at all. It was then that Mr. Otto Weil gave some significant data to the Press as to the situation. I quote as follows:

"The history of the Irving Place Theatre has shown that there was never great financial success for any manager here, unless there was something in the play or the actors to interest

the American theatregoer as well as the German citizens.

“Mr. Conried, in spite of the favorable circumstances under which he controlled the theatre, never did any large business unless he got in the outside public, although in his day the general patronage of the theatre was much better than it is to-day. Those were days in which the Germans came to the theatre, and it was common enough to see there Carl Schurz and his family, George Ehret and his family, the Thalmanns, the Speyers, the Ruperts, the Seligmans, and the other representative German families. Mr. Thalmann came once last winter, and the old crowd of first-nighters has dwindled until it is scarcely noticeable.

“The audiences at the German Theatre have always been divided into three classes,—those that came regularly to the first nights, those that came always on Saturdays, and those that came on Sundays because they were not free at any other time, and were willing to witness a play done without costumes or change of scenery, rather than not at all. To these must be added the American contingent that came when anything interested it specially.”

Once in control of the Irving Place Theatre, Heinrich Conried was in his element. He be-

came the autocrat, and many the anxious eyes that would gaze at the door of his office and wonder what mandate would issue therefrom. And in a way, one can see why it was he assumed this autocratic manner. He was a man of contracts throughout his life. Whenever he came from abroad, his trunk was loaded with them. He joined that association of managers in Germany calling themselves "Der Deutsche Bühnenverein," and under the chairmanship of the General Intendant of the Prussian Court Theatres. The object was to safeguard themselves against those who wilfully broke their contracts.

During the very first season at the Irving Place Theatre, Mr. Conried firmly established his policy, though naturally he went cautiously to work. He published a review of that season in a little booklet, which clearly reveals how thorough he was, how steadfast to his idea of establishing in New York a repertory theatre. During a period between October 2, 1893, and April 30, 1894, there were forty-nine separate plays given, among them the folk-piece, "Der Gefallene Engel," Fulda's fairy-tale, "Der Talisman," and Sudermann's "Die Heimat." Conried's company consisted of thirteen women and eighteen men. Conried himself played ten

times in "Prozesshansel" and as *Dr. Klaus*. Even in this first year he adhered to the habit of giving his audiences music, and he brought over the Ferenczy Opera Company for its first engagement in America; they gave "*Der Vogelhaendler*," "*Pagliacci*," and operas of like character. When the season was about to draw to a close, Conried addressed the following letter to "The Friends of the New York German Theatre." It was dated April, 1894. In substance it ran:

"The first season of the Irving Place Theatre under my direction is drawing to an end, and I am prompted to express my thanks to all those friends of art who have lent me their favor in the past year, and who have encouraged me to make further effort. At the same time, I request of my friends and patrons, as well as of the entire German population in this city, that they not only lend me their favor, but also that they give it to me in greater measure, so that I may succeed in fulfilling the difficult task to which I am applying my whole strength and whatever ability I have.

"I am neither boasting nor exaggerating when I say that I have proven by the past season that I can organize and direct a German

Theatre, worthy of the third largest city in the world.

“What I promised at the beginning of the season—to produce a number of the best modern stage pieces in a genuinely artistic manner—I have done; the recognition of the German and English press, as well as the approval of the public, is assurance of that.

“During the coming season the repertory of my theatre will experience another substantial increase; to the new plays which portray modern life in this country and on the other side, are to be added the best of the German classics—the best that the stage literature of the past offers. However, as a strong increase of my cast is necessary for the fulfilment of such plans—plans which I am sure will meet with approval—and as the expenses of the theatre will also be increased in many ways, I need for this the support of all the German friends who treasure German theatrical art in this city. But it is not the collection-box I shall pass around; it is not a subsidy that I ask for. It is something that has existed for a long time in the large and small theatres of the old country: a steady subscription for single seats and for special evenings throughout the entire sea-

son—an assurance of a subscription that applies to cheap seats as well as to the expensive ones. In other words, I need the support of those in moderate circumstances.

“Such a subscription is as much in the interest of the patrons as of the theatre. For the latter it secures a firm basis, to the former it grants the opportunity of securing for themselves, without extra expense, even with a small reduction in price, desirable seats for definite evenings of every week. Thus, in the general course of things, one can be sure of finding on his subscription evening his likewise subscribing friends and acquaintances in the theatre.

“It is quite plain that I must consider myself bound so to regulate my repertory that the subscribers may witness a different production every visit they make to the theatre. If the case occurs that an especially successful novelty has to run for several weeks in succession, it is left to the subscribers to redeem their tickets at the box-office of the theatre at their sale price.

“The amount of the subscription may be paid at the discretion of the subscriber, either for the whole season or for the half season or for a month in advance.

“The price of seats as follows:

“Subscription Scale for the season from October 1st, 1894, to May 1, 1895.

1 orchestra chair	\$40.00
1 orchestra chair—last rows	25.00
1 balcony chair, 1st and 2nd rows	25.00
1 balcony chair	20.00
1 balcony chair	13.50
1 gallery seat	13.50
1 gallery seat	9.50

“The subscription price for an orchestra box (6 seats) for a whole season amounts to \$400; for a first tier box (6 seats), \$300. The box-office price for these seats is about 15 to 20 per cent. higher.

“This request is sent to all my friends and patrons—not only to subscribe themselves, but to work in their circle of friends. Try to fill out the accompanying subscription blanks, and return to me as soon as possible. I remain,

“Respectfully,

“HEINRICH CONRIED.”

This subscription idea never left the mind of Heinrich Conried; it grew with his artistic development; and, as he became more and more familiar with the American people, his efforts became centred on schemes for the establish-

ment of a National Theatre. Thus early, we see the germs of those plans later suggested in connection with the New Theatre. Before accepting the position at the Thalia Theater, a subscription playhouse was what he sought to establish for himself. Whenever he was approached for any expression of opinion, he always reverted to his subscription scheme; he never for an instant doubted that, once the theatre was supported, it would find its own repertory.

The American Dramatists Club had Conried as guest of honor at a dinner given at Delmonico's on the evening of April 19, 1903. He spoke in the light of his own accomplishment at the Irving Place Theatre. He also spoke in view of the fact that a short-lived National Theatre Society, under the Presidency of Mr. J. I. C. Clarke, was then agitating the establishment of a National Theatre in New York—an agitation which, in its way, prepared the path for the later New Theatre. Mr. Conried said at the time:

“The stage,—the theatre,—is educational, and therefore cannot be left to private enterprise. Portugal knows it, and Spain, Norway, Servia, even little Greece, insist on its maintenance. Public recognition of the stage would result in

its elevation. One play cannot be more than a one-sided thing. A stage compelled to run one play for months, or more, cannot be educational. An educational theatre is a nonentity without a changing repertoire to play upon all the emotions. The Shakespeare to glorify American civil virtues is yet unborn, or, if he is born, he lives in obscurity, barred from a stage that cannot afford to stage his play.

"Give me a National Theatre, and I am sure that the American Shakespeare will write. This project cannot be accomplished in a year. We will be lucky if it can be accomplished in six years, if the plan followed at the *Comédie Française* be followed. It could be established without great financial backing. The plan is simple. We shall be able to build such a theatre very easily. The assurance is given me by a very wealthy man that as soon as the plan is devised, it will receive the requisite financial support.

"According to my plan, the house will contain a stage, and sufficient facilities for elaborate productions in the way of scenery, costumes, and carpentry work. How much will it cost to maintain such a theatre? It will be admitted by all of you that \$5,000 a week is a fair average of receipts in the commercial theatre. This, divided into six days, gives receipts of \$800 a

night, leaving \$200 for matinées. The National Theatre would have a season of thirty weeks. It would produce ten plays in the first year, giving three weeks to one play, and so changing the audiences every eighteenth day. Then we can say to the people, 'Will you be a subscriber and see every new performance?' The best society in New York City would attend. We would get 3,600 people in New York City to subscribe \$40 each for two seats in the orchestra, and that would provide a fund which, from my experience as a manager, I am sure would pay for the salaries. The second year we would change the bill once a week, and within six years have the house so established that we could change it every night, and have not 3,600 but 600,000 subscribers."

In part, this is the support Mr. Conried asked in his prospectus of the New York German population. It would have been an easy matter for him to have followed the line of least resistance, but instead he set himself the task of creating a high standard of stock. It would be useless to review his régime in minute details; that would embrace a very generous survey of the whole theatrical activity in Germany and Austria during nearly a decade and a half. The minute analysis would reveal Mr. Conried as

being closely in touch with the best thought of the time, since the best thought reached toward the stage for its proper expression. Nearly always his German novelties were seen first on the stage of the Irving Place Theatre, before they were translated; in one or two instances, they were given a production by permission of Augustin Daly, who at one period in his career was as eager for the German farce as other managers were for the French comedy of intrigue. Sometimes Charles Frohman would succeed in presenting a German play, altered to suit the audiences of his Empire Stock Company.* The Lyceum also occasionally turned to the German stage.

This much we may be assured of: had Heinrich Conried lived to direct the New Theatre, he would have attempted to maintain something of a classical standard; he would, for instance, have given Shakespeare a better chance than would have been afforded by any other American manager. But he would have been handicapped in other directions, for he would not have had the diversified material, rich in tradition and stimulating in novelty, which he

* For example, on February 6, 1900, a contract was drawn up between "C. F." and Conried for Gustav Kadelburg's three-act farce-comedy, "Das Bärenfell," and on March 18, 1901, for Fulda's "Die Zwillingsschwester" ("The Twin Sister").

brought to his German clientele. He had many things to contend with in America which he would not have had to consider had he lived in Germany. Mr. Norman Hapgood very wisely states that the effect of American life on the younger generation of Germans resulted in a willingness on their part to support the German farce in lieu of Schiller, and for want of this lighter material, to wander over to Broadway, where there was a different standard and idea in the theatre. Mr. Conried had to present a mixed repertory; however much he might love to do so, he could not draw as clean a line between farce and the legitimate drama as is drawn in the German playhouses abroad.

But he knew his German drama, whether it was in German or in translation, and he was able to infuse into it a vitality which no other manager on this side of the water could do. "I have seen Mr. Conried put life into a Sudermann scene in ten minutes," writes Mr. Hapgood, "when, before his arrival, an English company could make of it nothing but wandering talk." He must here have had reference to the fact that, while Mrs. Patrick Campbell was making ready to appear in "The Joy of Living," Mr. Conried rehearsed her company. In acknowledgment of this, the actress was most effusive,

and ever held Mr. Conried in great respect. When she came to America, she never failed to seek his encouragement. "I feel your opinion and advice would be of much help to me, dear Herr Conried, and I would be so grateful for it," she once wrote him from the Hotel Seville, in New York (October 11, 1902).

Though Mr. Conried was loath to criticize English, American, or French actors, he often narrated how he changed Bernhardt's *L'Aiglon* scene before the mirror. "If you hold the candle so," he explained, taking the light from her, "it will be impossible for you to see anything, so great will be the glare between you and the mirror. But what you should do is to hold the candle back of you slightly—like this." He was ever quick in gaining the best effects.

The Irving Place season of 1894-95 was a decided advance over the first season. When he returned from Europe on his annual pilgrimage, Mr. Conried announced in the German papers that he had secured such "stars" as Max Bira, Max Hanseler, and Lucie Freisinger. The month of November was particularly rich, and showed to a marked degree how Mr. Conried was keeping faith with his public. On the 5th, he celebrated, in rich fashion, the fourth centennial of Hans Sachs, presenting a mixture

of drama and music, and calling in the services of Anton Seidl, who directed the orchestra for the overture of "Die Meistersinger." Schiller's birthday was on the 9th, celebrated by an earnest production of "Maria Stuart." Perhaps the première looked forward to with most eagerness was that of Max Halbe's "Die Jugend" (December 13, 1894). In this, his first season, he began drawing upon the prolific pens of Blumenthal and Kadelburg, presenting "Die Orientreise," which Augustin Daly gave under the name of "Trip to the East." Gustav von Moser figured several times in the repertory, and, during a performance of Freytag's "Die Journalisten," on April 30, 1895, Mr. Conried announced the news of the author's death. The season gave every evidence of earnest endeavor. It was a later production of "Jugend" which so impressed Mr. Hapgood, who writes in his book, "The Stage in America":

"A short time ago I was watching Max Halbe's famous play, 'Jugend,' at the Irving Place, enjoying it thoroughly, and thinking over questions which some American actors had asked about the possibility of putting on an English translation. It seemed to me likely to fail, whoever might attempt it; yet it ran so well in Germany that it at once made for

the author a reputation. Only part of the difference is in the audience. Another point is that it is almost impossible to think of a cast that would play it as well as did the members of Mr. Conried's company. The only weak point was a visiting star. The idiot was played by Julius Strobl, a man who, in his years here, appeared often as the leading young gentleman in farces, or a young swell in society plays; who was *Dr. Rank* in 'A Doll's House,' some nameless soldier in 'Wilhelm Tell,' *De Guiche* in 'Cyrano de Bergerac,' and so on through a long list, and his performance in 'Jugend' was simply perfect. The girl was played by Emmy Schroth, whose versatile talent ranged from *Rautendelein* in 'Die Versunkene Glocke' to ordinary soubrette rôles and the pathos of 'Jugend.' This is one of the important conditions of the Irving Place Theatre. When an actor is engaged there, he shows his repertoire, which sometimes includes several hundred parts."

There were others like Mr. Hapgood to recognize the superiority of Mr. Conried to any American manager of the day. Who but he could have so trained his company that at a moment's notice they could slip from farce into the highest poetry! It was largely a matter

of coöperation which made his company so excellent. They brought to the Irving Place Theatre stage a knowledge and an experience which the American actor did not have. They were as familiar with the spirit of German farce, comedy and tragedy as Conried himself. When the time came for rehearsal, the manager read the play to the company, and discussed it with them as a whole, in the light of its literary completeness. When Mr. Conried's company failed, it was most likely to be at a moment when their Teutonic minds could not grasp the volatile nature of the Gallic. Oftentimes, also, they gave too German a cast to Shakespeare. But never was there a lack of complete understanding. Conried's actors knew the value of verse; they differentiated, for example, between the technique required to interpret the spirit of "Wilhelm Tell" and of the "Comtesse Gucki."

Ask the frequenters of the old Irving Place Theatre to name over some of the triumphs of Heinrich Conried, and they will say: It was through him that we became familiar with "Alt Heidelberg," given with that German university atmosphere which the English production failed to catch. Was it not he who introduced us to "Die Weber" and "Die Versunkene Glocke"? And again they will

say: His company seemed to respond to every demand made by the German dramatists. Would we have known as much of Sonnenthal, who made Lessing live for us; would we have had the *Nora* of Frau Sorma? And, as far as music is concerned, without Conried would we have been so early familiarized with "Die Fledermaus," "Boccaccio," or "Der Bettelstudent"? It was Herr Conried's régime that did all this for us. That is what they will say.

The notable performances of the season 1895-96 were "Die Räuber," with Conried in the cast, "Die Fledermaus," "Wilhelm Tell," with Mathieu Pfeil, "The Countess Gucki," with Adolph Link and Anna Braga, both favorites with the Irving Place audiences, "Romeo and Juliet," and "Dr. Klaus," with Georg Engels.

During the next year, Frau Sorma attracted more than a German audience. It was in the spring of 1897, and she made her début in Ibsen. Her *Nora* is one of the notable contributions to histrionic art. Only she has been able thus far to show to Americans that true spiritual awakening which takes place in a drama that so many call impossible simply because they cannot reconcile to themselves the act of *Nora's* leaving her children. But Sorma not only made it evident, both in psychology

and technique, what was taking place in *Nora's* soul; when she slammed the door in her husband's face—a slam which is the “revolutionary” part of the drama—she made the audience fully aware of the spiritual change to take place in the man after she left him. It was during one of Sorma's “guesting” engagements at the Irving Place Theatre that Herr Rudolph Christians appeared under Conried's management. He came over originally in Sorma's company. Little did he know at the time that the fate of the German theatre in New York would eventually rest in his hands, as it is doing now. Sorma's repertory consisted (April 12 to May 4, 1897) of *Nora* in “A Doll's House”; *Dora* in “Diplomacy”; *Chic*; *Rautendelein* in “Die Versunkene Glocke,” and *Lorle* in “Dorf und Stadt.”

No one could discuss the Irving Place Theatre performances in a light manner; a week's repertoire forced an audience into intellectual communion. In no other place in America has Goethe been seen to such advantage. It took some artistic bravery—to say nothing of commendable ambition—for a manager to present the two parts of “Faust,”* as Conried did one

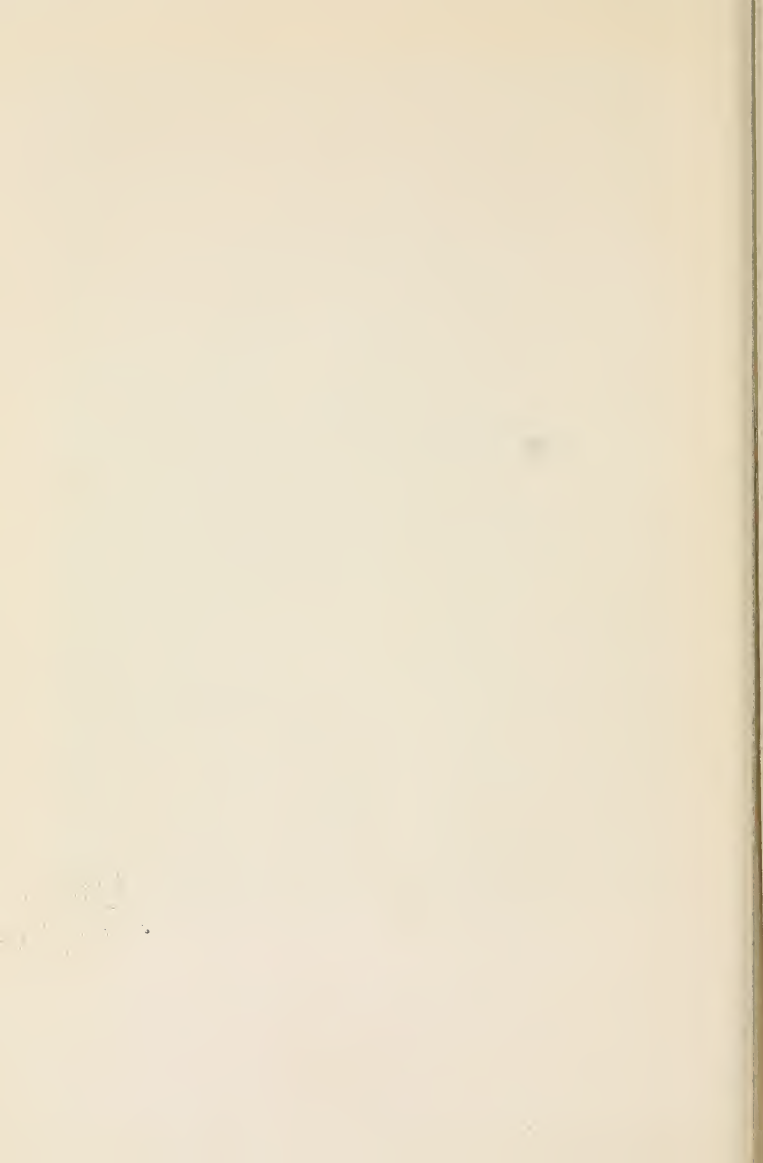
* This was during April, 1901, W. H. Carl Emmerich in a rôle longer than that of *Hamlet*. Kirschner was the *Mephistopheles* and Miss Merito the *Gretchen*.



An
Miss Sperlin sendet
güt, das davor nicht
wunder sehr lieb aus
wundersamen Rautendelein
Warme Agne. Sorma

14 Aug. 98

AGNES SORMA AS RAUTENDELEIN



season. Audiences were trained at the Irving Place to listen to literature. Again I draw upon the excellent enthusiasm of Mr. Hapgood—the one American critic to preserve in book form a tribute to the German Theatre as part of the stage in America. He is writing of Sonnenthal in “Nathan der Weise,” and is suggesting that, had the play been given before a Broadway audience, it would have been a “frost.”

“. . . In this literary and untheatrical play Sonnenthal received an ovation comparable to the lurid first night of *Zaza*. . . . What had happened when, at the end of the scene between *Nathan* and *Saladin*, in the third act, the cultivated audience recalled the actor again and again, with the heartiest and most spontaneous enthusiasm? Why, he had delivered a parable in a number of long speeches. He had stood there, and in the quietest and gentlest tones explained to the *Sultan* some profound truths about religion. In monologues, pages in length, he had laid out a beautiful truth, written in classic German, recited with abundant grace, clearness and seriousness, but without one stage trick; and the audience loved it, leaned forward to grasp every word and every shade of delivery, and went home feeling that one evening more had been properly spent.”

In other words, those who regularly attended the performances at the Irving Place Theatre grew in taste and understanding. They took personal pride in the actors, and came gradually to measure their capabilities as from night to night these actors undertook different rôles. Mr. Conried maintained the old system of "benefits," and at such times it became clearly evident who were the favorites with the New York German public. There were constant surprises given by the different actors, as new possibilities were offered them from season to season. They could not become stereotyped, because variety kept them flexible. Tuesday evenings were known as "classical nights."

The season of 1897-98 maintained the same element of novelty, and marked Conried's anniversary of twenty-five years since his stage début. With the festive spirit ever to the front, on the evening of February 23, 1898, the Director took a benefit, and himself appeared as *De Banville* in "Gringoire." He likewise took part in the second act of "Die Fledermaus." He had much for which to congratulate himself, and the standard he had set for his theatre was more than being maintained from year to year. His bills every week continued to be varied; there was no other theatre

in the city that had the resources displayed at the Irving Place. Imagine playing one night Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe"; another night, "Jourfix"; the next, a dramatization of "Jane Eyre"; and in the same week, "Madame Sans Gêne."

There was a popular demand for Sorma's return, and when she answered the call, she added to her repertory Max Bernstein's "Mädchentraum" ("A Maiden's Dream") and Roberto Bracco's "Untreu." During the course of her stay, there were several premières, the greatest being on the evening of April 29th, when "Königskinder" was given for the first time. Rudolph Christians was the King's *Son* and Sorma the *Goose-girl*. In the cast also were Max Hanseler, Carl Frischer, and Gustav v. Seyffertitz. This was the play which, as an opera, was later to be given at the Metropolitan Opera House. But at the Irving Place Theatre only a musical accompaniment was used.

The season of 1897-98 was also distinctive for the amount of opera given at the theatre. On November 4th, the operetta, "Die Lachtaube" ("The Cooing Dove"), met with considerable success, and on November 29th, Strauss's "Waldmeister" was sung. Conried was able to draw his opera company at this

time from that of the Irving Place, but he engaged Julie Kepacsy, an outsider, for his prima donna. Those who have remembrance of these days will recollect with what degree of excellence the choruses were trained.

But there was other training that Conried was doing. He was making his audiences critical and discerning. They could judge between the suitableness and unsuitableness of a rôle for Anna Braga; they could realize the difference between the ingénue rôles which Sorma gave with spirit and dash, and her superb moments in the crucial moments of *Nora's* life. They could discriminate between the ensemble excellence in a German farce and the limitations of the same ensemble in "Divorçons," for instance, where the Teutonic temperament failed to grasp the French atmosphere. Their discrimination gave them a certain authority to pronounce judgment, and the "guest" who came from abroad found himself before the most enlightened theatre public New York had. They could enjoy a farce and take it for what it was worth.

The farce element at the Irving Place Theatre was its most stereotyped phase. Farce, after all, is a matter of trickery, and the German dramatists in that *genre* used as many

tricks as the French. The suspended catastrophe, the trifling misunderstandings, the forced humor between father and son-in-law—the theatregoers sometimes chafed under the self-evident difficulties served up to them. If they accepted these farces, they did so because of the flawless acting and the beauty of the staging. Consult the American press of the time, and you will find the critics marvelling at the uniform excellence of these productions.

The season of 1898-99 was marked by a pronounced success. Against his policy and his will, Conried was forced to give a "run." I refer to Blumenthal and Kadelburg's "Im weissen Roess'l," presented on November 14. Immediately the English rights were secured by Daniel Frohman. The Bavarian peasant-actors had a season during this year, and since then have visited America many times with only moderate recognition. Apart from the run given to Felix Philippi's "Das Erbe" (January 5, 1899); apart from Fulda's "Jugendfreunde," given superlatively on February 9, 1899, with Anna Braga* and Julius Strobl in the cast; apart from several pleasant little comedies, the most distinctive performance of the year was Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," Ludwig Ful-

* Now Mrs. Nahan Francko.

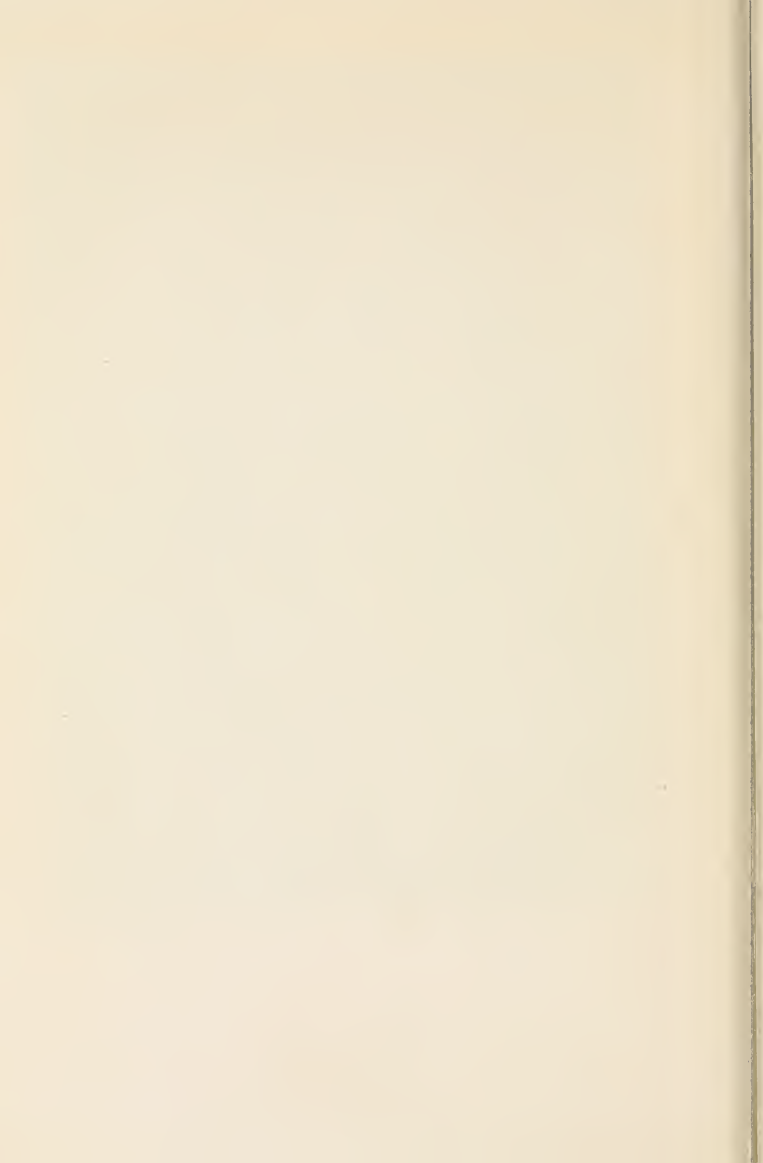
da's version, presented on March 13th, for the benefit of the Heine monument in New York City—a monument that raised a storm of protest, and attracted the spleen of vandals because of its inartistic workmanship. The performance called for care and industry in preparation. Eugene Schady was announced for the title rôle, but, on short notice, Strobl played it after two days' study. Ada Merito was *Roxane*. It created a distinct impression.

On April 3, 1899, Marie Geisteringer was the "guest" at the Irving Place Theatre. She had, at first, been brought to America by Amberg, who ran her at his Germania Theater, on Eighth Street, in opposition to Sorma. Then, on April 6th, Sonnenthal, after an absence of fifteen years, began an engagement,* for which occasion the prices were raised. His repertoire consisted of Lessing's "Nathan der Weise," Larder's "Alte Junggesellen," Schiller's "Wallensteins Tod," Adolf Wilbrandt's "Tochter des Fabricius" ("The Daughter of Fabricius"), Hauptmann's "Fuhrmann Henschel," and Ohnet's "Der Heuttenbesitzer" ("The Iron Mask"). After his engagement, the Hungarian societies of the city presented him with a silver wreath, and Conried offered him a silver toilet-set in token of appreciation.

* *Nation* (N. Y.), 88:368.



SONNENTHAL AS NATHAN IN NATHAN DER WEISE



When Conried celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary, the local papers all commented on his having produced something like two hundred and seventy plays. How many he actually did mount during his entire régime at the Irving Place is of small significance, if we understand that his repertory house was repertory in every sense of the word.* He never swerved from his initial intention, and through the seasons to follow there were many notable evenings.

After his appointment as Director of the Metropolitan Opera House, the actual time he bestowed upon the theatre began to be less and less. Those he placed in control, however, simply acted under his orders. The history of the executive side of the Irving Place Theatre, as it relates to Conried from the time he transferred his main office to the Opera House, may be told in few words. The most notable assistants were Max Hanszler and Gustav von Seyffertitz. The latter, particularly, not only had won for himself an enviable position among the German theatregoers as a comedian of the first rank, but his ability in character rôles had been noticeable. After Mr. von Seyffertitz left

* An article on the German Theatre in New York is published in *Theatre Magazine* for March, 1902. For an article on Baumbach, see *Theatre Magazine*, November, 1907.

the German Theatre, and appeared on the English stage, he was regarded as a stage-manager of large creative force—a legacy partly bequeathed to him by Conried. This was recognized by Charles Frohman and others. In 1905-06, when he acted as regisseur, Mr. Conried becoming more and more involved in opera matters, the excellence of the Irving Place Theatre was largely due to how well Mr. von Seyffertitz interpreted the aim and ambition of Conried. Under this régime Mr. Conried continued to return from Europe with yearly plans for the Irving Place Theatre. Until his actual resignation in April, 1907, it was a marvel to many how much care and attention he actually did give to the Irving Place Theatre.*

In passing over the years, one cannot refrain from pointing to those distinctive performances of which any manager might well be proud. The season of 1900-01 was marked by the appearance of Hedwig Lange, who always showed intelligent grasp in such parts as *Magda*, and

* The next step in the history of the Irving Place Theatre was that August Lüchow took over the lease from Conried, paying him between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for it. Otto Weil became manager for a season, losing in the neighborhood of \$50,000. The next year, Burghardt and Stein were in control, and then Burghardt assumed the responsibility alone. Amberg brought Possart over to the theatre, which, during 1910-11, was under his management. Then Baumfeld's régime began, followed by Rudolph Christians, the present incumbent.

who, in "Der Letzte Brief" (February 17, 1901), Heinrich Laube's version of Sardou's "Scrap of Paper," exhibited polished acting.

In 1901-02, Hedwig Ostermann was one of the leading figures in the casts. Her work in Sudermann's "St. John's Fire" (November 6, 1901) was distinctive in its technique. As usual, Mr. Conried sought to combine novelty of material with variety of casts. When the theatre opened on October 1, 1901, he presented Paul Heyse's "The Veiled Image at Saïs." The theatre had been redecorated, and Herr Reimann, of the Royal Theater in Kissingen, Herr Rottmann, of the Court Theater in Hanover, Fraulein Brandt, of the Court Theater in Weisbaden, made their débuts. I mention this as typical of the scope of the Conried régime. A little exercise of the imagination will impress one with the fact that in order to obtain new actors while abroad, Mr. Conried had to ferret in out-of-the-way corners, and pick and choose. This he always did with quickness and wisdom. Many a night would be spent hastening to some remote art centre in Germany, where he had been informed of some worthy actor waiting for his chance. It was Germany transferred to Irving Place.

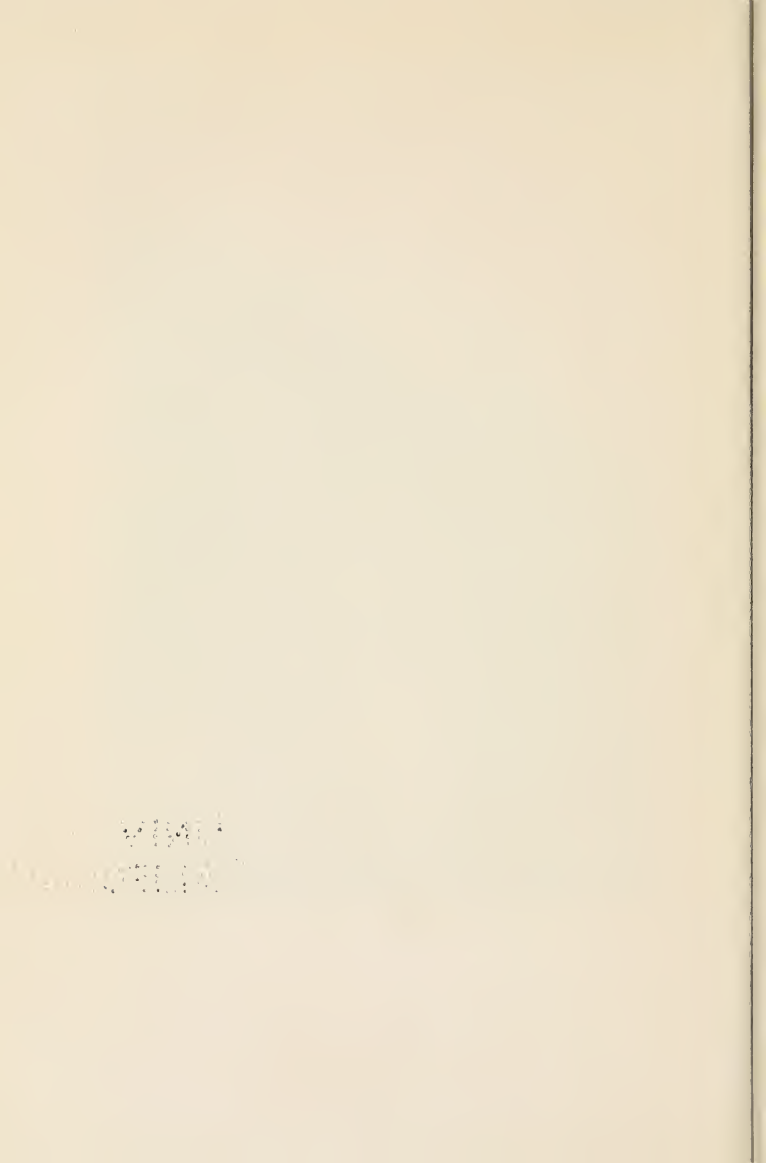
The time will come when some enthusiastic

university student will compile a complete list of the Conried repertory, and from that list will argue as to the full value of the Conried régime. But, in doing so, he will find himself discussing the German drama as a whole. The audiences of those days were familiar with the names of such dramatists as Friedrich Halm, Max Dreyer, Benno Jacobson, Erich Hartleben, and others of like weight. To obtain his plays, Mr. Conried did not go blindly to work; he became personally familiar with whatever drama he accepted for presentation. The intellectual effect of this alone was marked upon his character. In other directions he may not have been a deeply read man, but his knowledge of the German drama in the concrete was as large as, if not larger than, that of the most educated German of his day.

There is a phase of his activity which we are about to consider—a phase which made of the Irving Place Theatre one of the most considerable educational institutions of art in this country. I refer to the relationship existing between Mr. Conried and the universities. We shall have something to say of the lectures and performances given elsewhere than on the stage of his theatre, and of the recognition he received because of this outside activity.



SONNENTHAL AND CONRIED AT BAD GASTEIN
IN LATER LIFE



Suffice it here to say that on March 21, 1901, the one hundred and fiftieth birthday of Goethe was celebrated in the gala fashion so characteristic of Conried. The play was "Iphigenie auf Tauris," with *Orestes* played by Karl Wagner and the title rôle by Martha Schiffel. Only a few weeks after, during a period of opera at the Irving Place Theatre, Madame Schumann-Heink sang in "Das Versprechen Hinter'm Herd"—a foreshadowing of closer relationship which was to exist between the two as impresario and prima donna.

Helene Odilon* was one of the famous "guests" of the next season. She was a Viennese player of emotional parts. Sonnenthal and Ferdinand Bonn also appeared. We note a typical week at the Irving Place, over which the German public might justly exult. On April 22, 1902, Sonnenthal played "Nathan der Weise." The next evening, Odilon appeared in Fulda's "Die Zwillingsschwester"; while on the 14th and 15th, Sonnenthal gave "Der Marquis von Villemer." The following night, Bonn and Sonnenthal combined their talents in "King Lear."

Ferdinand Bonn was somewhat of a disappointment to Conried, for, being physically

* See *Theatre Magazine*, May, 1902.

brawny and thoroughly Teutonic in sentiment—being likewise addicted to a certain solemn and heavy demeanor—he was not popular among those of the Irving Place clientele who were not traditionally brought up in the old, solid school of acting. However, when he returned the following season (January-February, 1903), he was better received. His performance of Felix Philippi's "The Great Light" was a noteworthy study of insanity, powerful in its realism.* His Hamlet—a blond one, by the way—had none of the spiritual sensitiveness associated with the part. He appeared in several of his own pieces, a mixture of originality and adaptation, but these only served to show how much better he was as an actor than as a playwright. With Camilla Dalberg, he gave a breezy performance of "The Taming of the Shrew," and in his own piece, "The Pastor's Son," he preached to the public the evil effects of scandal, at the same time announcing that the piece was autobiographical. His *Richard III.* never thrilled. It only served to illustrate that, at the Irving Place Theatre, though there was much hard work expended on Shakespearian productions, none of them, in the words of the current Press, "rose above

* For Bonn, see *Theatre Magazine*, May, 1902.

the level of respectable mediocrity—none of them had even a flash of genius in them.”

As for Odilon, a woman of great beauty and charm, during her engagement she was supported by the flower of Conried's stock company. In her acting she displayed great frankness; her manner was wholesome, and in bearing she exhibited superb womanliness. Her première was in Hermann Bahr's "Der Star," after which she was seen to advantage in "Camille," though she failed to reach the emotional pitch expected of her. In Fulda's "Die Zwillingsschwester," there was ample opportunity to demonstrate her talents for comedy. If casual reference is to be relied upon, it was during this time that Conried himself appeared, in conjunction with Odilon and Bonn, in a German version of "La Robe Rouge," by Brioux.

It is well to pause here and weigh something of Herr Conried's own attitude toward the work he was doing. Surely there was something more to his activity than mere managerialship. Let us grant that at times he was vain-glorious; let us grant that as a business man he had an eye toward the furtherance of his business schemes; still does the mere enumeration of the stage history at the Irving Place

Theatre contain something exhilarating in it. The seasons could not have been brilliant had there not been some force akin to genius behind them. Other managers of the same house can hardly be compared with him, for not only have conditions in the German Theatre of New York changed, as we have said, but Conried's own personality had a great deal to do with his success. Lay the cause of the brilliancy of his régime to the brilliant resources at hand in Germany, the resources to-day are still the same as they were then, and the German Theatre in New York is on the wane. The German drama is still representative of the best of intellectual Germany, yet its force has not been able to give aid to the commendable efforts of Herr Christians. From what I know of Herr Conried's personality, I feel sure that he would have given new force to the dying spirit of '48, if he had been alive to-day; he would have kept the Irving Place Theatre at its height through its very hold on the best in German drama. Conried maintained this hold during the years of his active interest in the playhouse, and he did it, not alone through the exercise of a certain clever business foresight, but through a certain intellectual enthusiasm which he had—though there be some who would deny it to him.

CHAPTER IV

HEINRICH CONRIED AND THE UNIVERSITY: Affiliation, lectures, benefit performances. Honors: Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Pennsylvania, Cornell, Vassar, and other institutions. The Classic Drama at the Irving Place Theatre. The Modern Literary Stage. Conried's artistic ideals as displayed in the German Theatre. Mr. Conried in Court: *versus* Witmark; *versus* the widow of Johann Strauss. Plans for a new Irving Place Theatre.

THE reputation of Mr. Conried as a producing manager was not alone confined to New York; it extended throughout the United States, and won for him a most enviable standing among intellectual circles. The colleges encouraged their students to see the Irving Place productions, and Mr. Conried himself arranged so that special rates were offered them. Because of this, it was not long before the Irving Place Theatre came to be considered by all as an educational institution. Conried coveted the prestige that university patronage would give him, and, as a side issue—by his interest, enthusiasm, and actual assistance—he started a Deutscher Verein in more than one college.

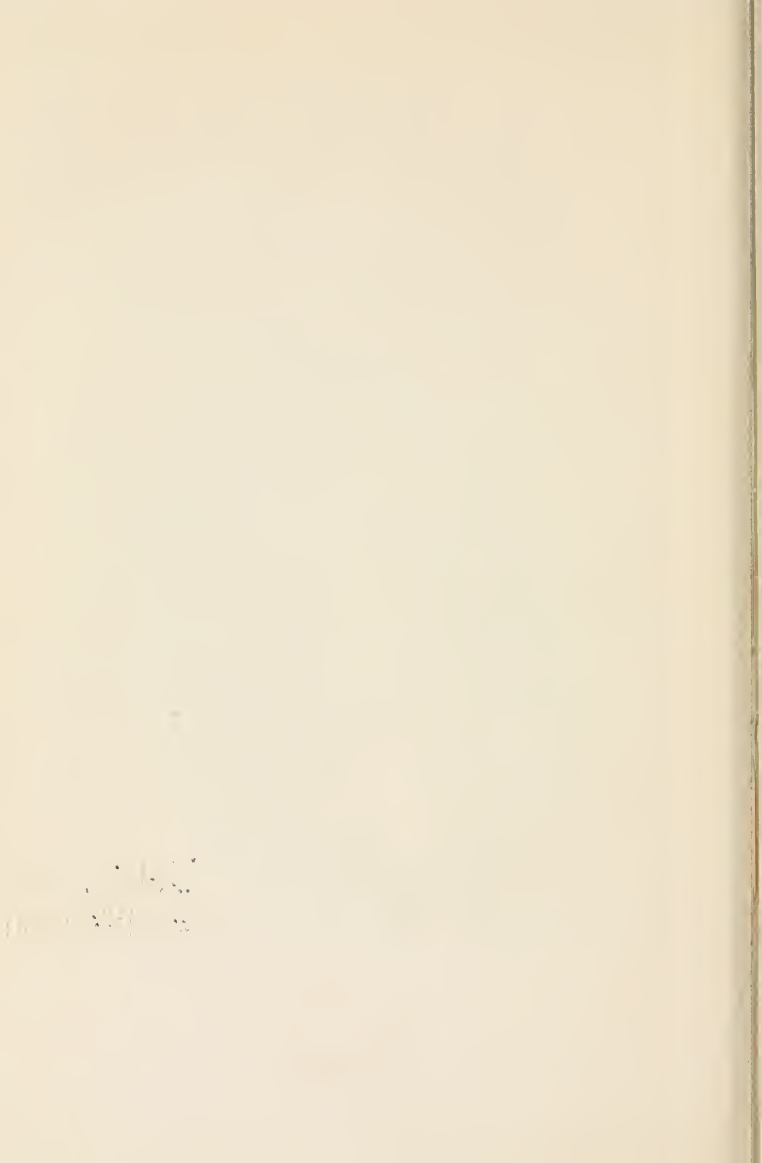
Professor William H. Carpenter, of Columbia University, during the time he held the chair of Germanic Languages, was in constant association with the Herr Director, and for thirteen years he had a box at the theatre, and was able to follow the work of the stock company minutely. With keen discernment, he recognized in Mr. Conried something more than the mere executive genius.

"I hope," he said, "you will emphasize in Mr. Conried the vigorous idealism which colored all his work. I do not think he has ever been given his just due as a man. Though there be two sides to every case, he was badly treated by the Press, which saw nothing good in him, and too strongly imputed to him those commercial motives which have decreased his share of credit as Director of the Metropolitan Opera House. I have never been able to reconcile to myself why there was such opposition to him.

"I was at the University of Leipzig when I first met Conried, but I did not see much of him until he came to New York. Then it was that together we reached an intellectual understanding of the German Theatre. I often tried to draw him outside of his set interests. He was exceedingly well-read in German literature,



HEINRICH CONRIED: LECTURER



partly because the great ratio of that literature is for the stage. He not only knew about Schiller and Goethe, in the general sense, but he also knew them in their deeper significance and national relationship. When he familiarized himself with a play, he had it in its every detail, and I verily believe he could have taken any actor's rôle at a moment's notice, without any preparation, and without additional study or rehearsal. He was always like a live wire of understanding.

"There was something fascinating about his personality, and something generous about his friendship. Whenever I came to the German Theatre, he always spoke of me as the Director, because, I remember at one time, I was called in on a technical matter during rehearsal, and was able to set them right. But Conried only accepted suggestion when he was assured of its rightness; otherwise he would rather follow his own instinct and be wrong. He was the kind of man who was the strong centre wherever he was; by vigor and swiftness he monopolized conversation; and if people wouldn't let him do this, he would draw within himself like a child.

"I started him on his lecture campaign at Columbia, and I believe he was sincerely in-

terested in doing this service for the University. Of course, it wasn't wholly disinterested, for, by affiliating himself with the universities, he only increased his own audiences the more. Before this he had often lectured at the Irving Place Theatre, talking from notes—lectures of more formal character than those he delivered in after years. If these notes have been destroyed, it will be unfortunate, for they contained ample evidence of his keenness of mind. They were well written; they showed a breadth of reading that was surprising in one so busy. I have to smile at the picture of the lecturer conjured up in my mind. Conried was ever the actor; he used to be punctilious regarding his entrance, and would always wait until his audience was entirely seated before he came upon the stage. Then, with his opera-hat under his arm, and wearing white gloves, he would stand and look his audience over. Slowly and deliberately, he would be drawing off those gloves meanwhile. Then, laying them neatly by the rim of his hat, he would begin—never once unconscious of the actor in him.

“All students in my classes went religiously to the Irving Place Theatre. The power of visualization is great, especially when a play has to be read or studied. One day I was talk-

ing to Professor Kuno Francke, of Harvard, about this, and telling him of the advantage of having the Irving Place Theatre almost as a laboratory for my students. And it was during this conversation that I suggested the scheme of having Conried visit Cambridge with his company. 'Do you think he would do it?' asked the Professor, skeptically. I had previously suggested the scheme to the Director, and he had eagerly assented to the proposal. So I took Francke to the Irving Place Theatre, and it was not long before the details were arranged. In my copy of the Harvard edition of 'Iphigenie,' which Conried gave me and which was the play selected for the occasion, there is this inscription on the fly-leaf: 'To one who made the performance possible.' I went with the company to Harvard. Conried used always to make these excursions to the universities sort of family parties, and would surround himself with his friends.

"I was often at his house to dinner, and I was with him on many special occasions when he had guests. I was called in for consultation when he first seriously contemplated accepting the Metropolitan Opera House offer. He was, I remember, much perturbed over the matter. 'Do you believe you can do it, Heinrich?' I

asked, and the reply was a decisive 'Yes.' I was with him on the occasion of the Sunday dinner to Fulda, and I remember the perfect table appointments, and the ice-cream which was cast in the form of a set of books. The Conried home relationship was a beautiful one, though it was dominated by a certain parental sternness which exercised itself particularly on young Dick." *

It is almost impossible to do more than gain a scattered impression of Mr. Conried's lectures, inasmuch as the notes have all been mislaid. There are inadequate reports of them in the newspapers and college magazines, hasty résumés, made by the casual listener. I find that on March 11, 1901, Mr. Conried addressed the American Academy of Dramatic Arts on "The Theatre," in the course of which he said:

"The Germans consider three factors in education—the school, the church, the theatre. It grieves me that in this glorious country I have never heard the theatre mentioned in connection with education. When people here speak of the theatre, they discuss the White Rats, White Mice, and Lambs. They never discuss

* See *Columbia University Quarterly*, June, 1900,—Carpenter on Conried, p. 290. Conried had given a special performance of "Iphigenie" on March 21, 1900, at the Irving Place Theatre, for one hundred and fifty students.

the theatre itself seriously, and there is much reason why this is so."

The greatest reason to Mr. Conried was the absence of any subsidized principle; only by subsidy would it be possible for America to maintain the theatre standard found in Europe.

"To become a manager of one of those theatres," he said, "I must send to the city authorities documents that prove my education to be such that I am fit to become the head of an educational institution. I should also have to prove that my moral character was good, and to deposit a certain sum of money. In cases of a speculative theatre, the deposit must be much larger. Apply this condition of things to our own country, and—I don't think I need add one word more."

And what, to Mr. Conried, was the essential differences between German and American audiences?

"The American goes to the theatre for amusement only. The German playgoer wants to take something home with him. He lives on discussions of the play, making the theme serve him as food for thought for many days. The American theatregoer does not think. He never stops to consider the ridiculousness of electric lights bursting from an orange grove in a

'L'Aiglon'* production at a period when Edison hadn't been born."

After all, the only way to be a manager of a theatre was to own such an ideal playhouse as the Vienna Court Theater. In the course of this address, Mr. Conried had much to say about the manager of the subsidized theatre.

"He is bound by his contract to engage a company that can play the Shakespearian dramas and light comedy. There is no question of 'line of business.' I hate the expression. Business has nothing to do with the stage. During the season, he must produce three Shakespearian plays, three of Goethe's works, three of Schiller's, one of Lessing's, one of Molière's. If grand opera is given, provision is made for the operas of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and others. No one play, however successful it be from the view of the box-office, dare be produced on consecutive nights. The repertoire must be changed four times a week."

In this strain he went on to paint the picture of theatrical conditions abroad, and the more he painted the more direful he made conditions in America—noticeably in New York. He expressed a hope for the future of stock

* The New York *Journal* calls attention to the fact that Conried once took Miss Adams over the Court Theatre, and gave her many suggestions, while she was studying the rôle of *L'Aiglon*.

companies, and then, for the benefit of the Sargent pupils, whom he was addressing on this, their graduation, he formulated three rules:

"1st. Never place two supers together.

"2nd. Never place your people less than two feet apart.

"3rd. Let each super act with an actor, and with one who is about ten feet distant. The necessity of expressing at that distance gives him life."

The newspapers came to the rescue of the American Theatre, and asserted, with some show of truth, that the reason Mr. Conried was continually throwing the Vienna Burg Theater in our faces was that such an institution was founded upon his "inborn Teutonic love of bureaucracy and officialism." And after all, said one report, let Mr. Conried laugh at American drama as he may, there is nothing in our native drama so poor as a poor German farce. Which is begging the argument, but none the less getting even!

I have gone through the files of the different college papers, in the hope of finding adequate synopses of the lectures which Mr. Conried repeated so many times at different places. But there is nothing that will properly represent his whole treatment of the subjects under

discussion. Stray references to his appearance, and to the invariable receptions given to him afterward, are all I have had to guide me, together with letters from the secretaries of the colleges, giving me the actual dates and names of the lectures. We know, for instance, that whenever he talked of the modern drama, he always began by giving an excellent résumé of the realistic school of dramatists in Germany, represented by Hauptmann and Sudermann. Then he gave ample consideration to Dreyer, Schnitzler, and Hartleben, as men of future magnitude. He was most emphatic regarding the effect of realistic drama on acting. Naturally given to florid expression and to romantic gesture, he held that the modern intimate type of theatre failed to make demands on great acting talents. He never failed to express the hope that the time would not be far distant when the younger playwrights would see things more with "the eyes of their mother." Then, more than likely, he would close this lecture, as he did before Vassar College, on February 11, 1903, with a reading from Schiller's "Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais," and "Die Kraniche des Ibicus."

Most of these lectures were delivered in English, but it was considered a privilege to hear

Mr. Conried, whenever he spoke in German. I have before me an editorial in the *Yale News* for March 21, 1900, which states:

"We are very glad that the German Club has announced that Mr. Conried will speak in German, at the Art School, Friday evening [March 23]. . . . Mr. Conried speaks English fluently, but it is a matter of principle with him not to give his initial lecture, especially his celebrated one on 'The Stage,' in any language except German, in the mastery of which there are few to excel him. Mr. Conried enters into his delivery with such artistic versatility . . . that even the poorest German scholar can follow him with ease and pleasure."

On March 22, 1900, it being the sixty-eighth anniversary of the death of Goethe, Mr. Conried took his Irving Place Theatre Company to Harvard, for a reproduction of "Iphigenie auf Tauris," in Sanders Theatre. Kuno Francke, Harvard Professor of German Literature, and Curator of the German Museum, wrote an extended review of this performance for *The Nation** (N. Y.), which is quoted as Professor Francke's tribute to one who did so much for the perpetuation of German ideals on the stage:

"When, in 1787, Goethe's 'Iphigenie' first

* March 29, 1900.

appeared in book form, it was received with lukewarmness, if not indifference. Even the intimate friends of the poet were disappointed. They had expected something in the vein of 'Götz' or 'Werther,' something impetuous, violent, revolutionary; and they could not help considering the measured rhythm of this dramatic symphony a regrettable submission to conventional form. They dismissed it as an artistic failure. The day before yesterday, on the sixty-eighth anniversary of Goethe's death, 'Iphigenie' was performed at Sanders Theatre, before throngs of Harvard students, nearly the whole of the Harvard faculty, and the intellectual élite of Boston and Cambridge; and it is no exaggeration to say that never have the walls of this academic sanctuary resounded with outbursts of more genuine delight than those which that evening broke forth from the crowded audience at the end of every one of the five acts. So striking a vindication of what is truly and unostentatiously great is a matter of deep rejoicing for those who believe in the spiritual mission of art. It is an event of more than local or provincial, nay, of more than merely national significance. And the question seems well worth asking, what the circumstances were which brought about this ovation

to German genius in the most un-German of the literary centres of America.

"The initial impulse came from a man whose name will enduringly be associated with that of the late Augustin Daly, as belonging to the small company of American theatrical managers to whom the stage is more than an opportunity for business ventures—Heinrich Conried, Director of the Irving Place Theatre of New York. Having received his artistic training at such model institutions as the Vienna Burg Theater, the Leipzic Stadt Theater, and the company of the Duke of Meiningen, this man has now for more than a decade devoted his best energies to the elevation of the American stage, and the result of his labors has been that New York has now at least one permanent theatrical organization which stands for the traditions of true histrionic art,—thoughtfulness, refinement, cultivation of form, subordination of the parts to the whole, submission of the actor to the poet—in short, for everything that is opposed to the vicious 'star' system. It is due to Mr. Conried that such great artists as Sonnenthal, Kainz, Possart, Agnes Sorma, can be seen in this country in a worthy and thoroughly harmonious ensemble; it is due to him that Hauptmann and Sudermann are

being brought out simultaneously in Berlin and New York; it is due to him that 'Wallenstein' and 'Faust' have recently entered upon a most promising transatlantic career.

"It was not surprising, therefore, although most gratifying, that when, some months ago, Mr. Conried was asked whether he was willing to follow up his generous services, previously rendered to Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania, by a similar service to Harvard University, he should have answered with a very emphatic and spontaneous 'Yes,' adding: 'I have always been convinced that the university, the church, and the stage are the three great educational forces of national life.' It was also not surprising that he should have been willing to have the entire proceeds of the proposed undertaking go toward enlarging the fund for our projected Germanic Museum. Nor was it surprising that he should have selected 'Iphigenie,' as the worthiest production of artistic genius, to represent German ideals to a distinctly academic audience at the foremost of American universities.

"Fundamental, and in their way unrivalled, as were Mr. Conried's services, the undertaking could not have been the phenomenal success that it was, had not the parts of the protagon-

ists been in the hands of two artists of surpassing excellence,—Martha Schiffel and Carl Wagner. Carl Wagner's *Orestes* was an achievement which brought to my mind the words in which Eckermann, after the Weimar performance, of 1827, described to Goethe the impression produced upon him by Krüger's impersonation of the same part:

“‘Whatever in this rôle,’ said Eckermann, ‘belongs to ecstatic, visionary intuition, came forth from his innermost being by means of gesture and voice, in such a manner that one fancied himself seeing it with his own eyes. At the sight of this *Orestes*, Schiller would surely not have missed the Furies in the play: they were chasing him, they were all about him. The beautiful scene where *Orestes*, awaking from the swoon, believes himself transported into the nether world, was amazingly effective. We saw the procession of ancestors, walking in confiding converse, we saw *Orestes* approaching them, addressing them, and joining their company. We felt transported ourselves, and received into the midst of the blessed: so pure, so deep was the feeling of the artist, so great his power of bringing before our eyes the invisible.’

“If Eckermann had been at Sanders Theatre,

he would have applied this praise, word for word, to Carl Wagner; and he would have added, I think, that Wagner's *Orestes* was equally noble in his heroic moods, in his despairing retrospect upon the time when he could still dream of great deeds to be done, and in his passionate outburst of joy when he, for the first time, feels the cloud of madness lifted from his head, and sees the light of day returning.

"The glory of the evening, however, was Martha Schiffel; for if Wagner's *Orestes* was an achievement, her *Iphigenia* was a gift from the gods. I have no words to describe adequately the artistic character of this wonderful woman. But I may perhaps be permitted, as a slight illustration of the truly human quality of her genius, to relate a little personal experience which I had with Fräulein Schiffel a few days before the performance. Proceeding on the common supposition that actors on the whole are not averse to publicity, I wrote to her suggesting that, if she wished to have her portrait appear in one of the Boston newspapers, I should be glad to make the necessary arrangements. Her answer was that she would willingly send me her photograph, but that unfortunately she didn't have any! A heroine without a photograph—this phrase one might

employ to indicate the secret of the inexpressible charm exerted by Fräulein Schiffel's acting on the *Iphigenia* evening. Here there was nothing of the virtuoso, not a suggestion of technical tricks, not a suspicion of artificial posing. Here everything was the generous and free effusion of a soul; here there was an instinctive reaching out into the divine; here Nature herself had been converted into art. What humility by the side of majestic grandeur, what tenderness by the side of austere solemnity, what repose by the side of deepest yearning, what harmony and grace by the side of passionate pathos! Truly, in this woman the Greek virago and the Christian saint were combined; and, as she stood leaning on the sacrificial column, and in noble abstraction chanted to herself the prodigious song of the Parcæ, one could not help seeing in her a perfect embodiment of that ideal beauty of which Schiller dreamed:

“Nicht der Masse qualvoll abgerungen,
 Schlank und leicht, wie aus dem Nichts gesprungen,
 Steht das Bild vor dem entzückten Blick,
 Alle Zweifel, alle Kämpfe schweigen
 In des Sieges hoher Sicherheit;
 Ausgestossen hat es jeden Zeugen
 Menschlicher Bedürftigkeit.”

“And, finally, the audience. What a remarkable gathering of spectators it was! We Germans take a just pride in our ability to appreciate foreign genius, in our having received Homer and Shakespeare and Dante into the company of German classics. But here there was an audience to whom a foreign poet was presented in his own language, a language which by the vast majority of the hearers was barely understood. And yet this multitude not only listened with respectful attention; it followed the rise and fall of the dramatic movement with an instinctive discrimination, with a noble enthusiasm, nay, with a religious awe such as I have hardly ever witnessed before. It seemed to feel every delicate shade of poetic meaning; it was alternately spellbound and carried away; now wrapt in breathless silence, now breaking forth into shouts of joy. Would that Goethe could have seen this audience; he would have felt that ‘Iphigenie’ was not written in vain.

“Yes, this evening was a triumph of German art. But it was also a triumph of American civilization. For I doubt whether such spontaneous outbursts of gratitude for an æsthetic treat of the most subtle sort offered by foreigners would have been possible in any other country than America. I doubt whether any-

where but here such a remark could have been heard as I heard that evening from an American friend of mine: 'I am thankful that I have lived to see the ideal *Iphigenia*.' To the few Germans in the audience, these evidences of generous and enlightened recognition of what is German in the best and highest sense must have been, as they were to me, ample compensation for the trials and heart-burnings inevitably associated with the separation from the friends of one's youth. Mr. Conried, on his part, may rest satisfied that he has chosen the right way to bring Germans and Americans closer to each other." *

On the anniversary of Lessing's birthday, January 22, 1901, Mr. Conried gave "Minna von Barnhelm," under the auspices of the Harvard Deutscher Verein, and for the benefit of the Germanic Museum. How much of a benefit this was can be seen by examining the various articles and reports written by Professor Francke. The Museum was formally opened on November 10, 1903, with addresses by the German Emperor's personal representative, by President Eliot, Hon. Carl Schurz, and Professors Francke and James. In the evening, the Irving Place

* The play was likewise given at Yale, Columbia, and Pennsylvania. A special Harvard edition, in artistic book form, was issued.

Theatre Company presented, at Sanders Theatre, three short plays, illustrating the various phases of German drama, from the sixteenth century to the present time. These pieces were Hans Sach's "Der fahrende Schuler im Paradies," Goethe's "Die Geschwister," and Fulda's "Unter vier Augen."

According to the 1904-05 report, Mr. Conried turned over to the Museum authorities the sum of \$675* as the proceeds of his year's production, and among the subscribers for the following season I find his name entered for a \$500 contribution to the Endowment Fund. Mr. Conried was an honorary Vice-President of the Association to the time of his death. The last report to mention his name spoke of him as a man of rare unselfishness and generosity.†

During all this while, Mr. Conried never lectured at Harvard; he let his company speak for him. In consequence of his services, the Deutscher Verein, in October, 1901, notified him of his election to honorary membership, in high

* It will be remembered that the late Charles Frohman, during the season of 1908, presented Maude Adams in a badly garbled version of Schiller's "Jungfrau von Orleans," for the benefit of the Museum. The performance, on a gigantic scale, was given in the Harvard Stadium, and netted the Museum nearly \$10,000.

† Professor Kuno Francke has written an account of the Germanic Museum for the *Harvard Graduate Magazine*, 11:360.

recognition of his activity in furthering the German spirit in Harvard. His badge and ribbon were sent to him in due course. In 1905, there was considerable correspondence between Mr. Conried, President Eliot and his secretary, regarding the Herr Director's attendance at Commencement exercises, when it was hoped that the degree of Master of Arts would be conferred upon him. But at the very last moment Mr. Conried was suddenly called away to Europe, and the honor was never bestowed.

I am indebted to Mr. Alfred K. Merritt, the registrar of Yale University, for the following accurate information:

Mr. Conried brought his German company from the Irving Place Theatre to New Haven six successive years, from 1901 to 1906. The plays he gave, and the dates are as follows:

Lessing's "Minna von Barnhelm":

Wednesday, March 6, 1901.

Goethe's "Iphigenie auf Tauris":

Monday, March 17, 1902.

Freytag's "Die Journalisten":

Wednesday, March 11, 1903.

Fulda's "Jugendfreunde":

Wednesday, March 16, 1904.

Schiller's "Kabale und Liebe":

Wednesday, March 15, 1905.

Fulda's "Maskerade":

Wednesday, March 7, 1906.

Incidentally, Professor W. L. Phelps wrote a poem on the occasion of the giving of the play, on March 15, 1905. Professor Gruener, who was the chairman of the committee in charge during the first four years, and Professor Farr, who succeeded him, kept a carefully arranged scrap-book, from which a very comprehensive idea may be obtained of the performances. Mr. Conried gave these plays for the benefit of the German Seminary in the University, and, as a result of his generosity, the German Department was able to establish a very excellent German library. The income, for example, from the first play, that of 1901, benefited the Seminary to the extent of over \$970.*

These productions were always looked forward to with a great measure of curiosity, and with great intellectual expectancy. In the *Yale Alumni Weekly*, for 1905, Professor Phelps' extended review of "Kabale und Liebe" indicates that it was hardly received with favor, though he realized that with all its exaggeration

* According to the *Yale Alumni Weekly*, the first three years netted \$2,200.

it "gives us one of the most sublime spectacles in the world—the revolt of the heart against the tyranny of convention."

But naturally, the chief emphasis to be laid upon the University performances was the opportunity offered by Mr. Conried for the student of German to hear something in German, by actors, and in a style governed by German tradition. This student attitude is excellently denoted in an editorial in the *Yale News*, for March 16, 1904:

"Mr. Heinrich Conried will present his fourth gratuitous play at the Hyperion to-night. The production is a characteristic German performance which one might see at the present time anywhere in Germany. The Irving Place Theatre, in New York, at least in so far as Mr. Conried's management of it is concerned, and his company, are also typically German. His company does no touring, but remains in New York, giving a great variety of productions during the season. This is consistent with the attitude toward the stage held by the Germans, who regard it much more from an educational point of view than Americans do. Unlike the latter, they have no so-called 'stars' in their casts, all the actors being practically on the same plane.

"There are several unique methods pursued in the stage management, which are peculiar to the Germans. For example, the stage floor is plotted off into squares, in one of which each actor has a definite assigned position at all times. A box is built up just in front of the footlights, with the sides toward the stage open. In this box, hidden from the audience, the prompter stays during the performance. From this he reads the entire play aloud to the actors, so that the latter do not have to commit their lines to memory, but, being familiar with them, they can repeat their parts after the prompter without difficulty. It is only by constant practice that the actors are able to avoid the stiffness and formality which naturally result from this lack of spontaneity in the German methods.

"Aside from amusement, there is considerable real profit to be obtained from to-night's play, both for those interested in the drama and for those studying German, to whom it offers an excellent chance to hear the language spoken. This is especially important, because perhaps the greatest fault in the Yale method of teaching a modern language is the lack of opportunity for advanced students to practise speaking and conversing in that language."

The Irving Place Theatre being so accessible

for the students of Columbia University, the necessity for special performances at that institution was not so urgent. At all times, Mr. Conried allowed special rates to college men, and once, on January 10, 1902, true to his purpose of lending aid to any organization devoted to the furtherance of German culture, he turned over the proceeds of a performance of "Kabale und Liebe" to the Columbia Deutscher Verein—amounting to over three hundred dollars—for the purchase of books. The several hundred volumes, each bearing a bookplate commemorating the gift, have since been turned over to the Collegiate German Study. But Columbia,* more than any other university, profited by having Mr. Conried as a lecturer, and we find him delivering the following:

March 22, 1898: "Die Bühne."

March 21, 1899: "Die Kunst des Sprechens."

* The Registrar of Columbia University states in his letter to me that Mr. Conried had the degree of Master of Arts, *honoris causa*, conferred on him by Yale University. Mr. Conried also lectured at Teachers College, on "The Stage as an Educational Factor," as well as before the Round Table, at the Horace Mann School. His son, Richard, having been a pupil at the Horace Mann, as well as a student at Columbia, Mr. Conried's name figured on many programmes as a patron of amateur theatrical performances. I find in the *Columbia University Quarterly* for September, 1905, an article by Professor Rudolph Tombo, Jr., descriptive of the Schiller Centenary, held on May 9, 1905, at which Mr. Conried recited. Mr. Conried was a frequent visitor at the Verein. For scant reports on the lectures, see the *Columbia Spectator*, and the current newspapers on the day after.

February 28, 1901: "Das moderne deutsche Drama."

February 26, 1902: "Das deutsche Theater in New York."

January 14, 1903: "Die Errichtung eines nationalen Theaters."

Dr. Marion D. Learned, Professor of the Germanic Languages and Literatures of the University of Pennsylvania, wrote me in terms of very strong appreciation. He said:

"Director Conried's services to the University of Pennsylvania, and to the Germanic Department in particular, were of very great significance. In the late nineties—about 1897—when we were planning to publish our researches in a rather elaborate form, we instituted what we called a German-American publication fund, and asked Director Conried to speak to us on the occasion of the dinner. With his keen insight into every situation, at the close of the dinner he arose and volunteered the services of his company at the Irving Place Theatre for a number of performances, under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania, during the following season. This was the first outside contribution to our publication fund. The following season Director Conried

sent his troupe from New York, and allowed it to play gratis for us, in the Academy of Music, Lessing's 'Minna von Barnhelm.' . . . It was a great artistic and financial success."

The productions followed, as they did at Yale, from year to year, the last being Fulda's "Maskerade," when the author himself occupied a box.

"It was as a slight recognition of these many services and the constant readiness of Director Conried to aid our cause, that the University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts. At the same time," continued Professor Learned, "I published an account of his early work in our interests. . . .

"It is a source of great satisfaction to me to know that the very active and useful life of Director Conried is to be put into permanent literary form, and to be made accessible to the public. It is difficult to give an adequate estimate of the service which Heinrich Conried rendered, not only to the German Theatre and Opera on the American stage, but also in the direction of stimulating a general and intelligent interest among the youth of the land for good drama and for the high significance of drama as a factor in national education.

"My own personal relations with Director

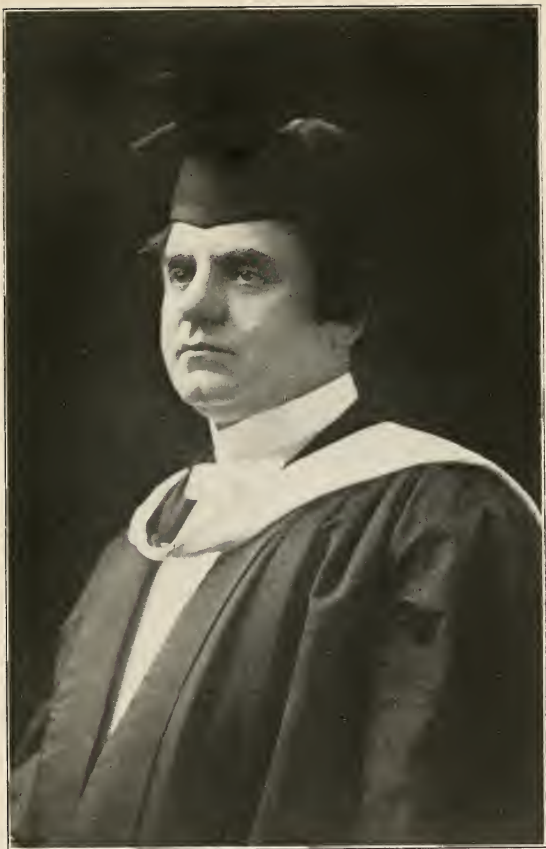
Conried were most pleasant, and I was his guest more than once at his playhouse. His breadth of view and his far-reaching artistic interest put him easily in the forefront of American histrionic art."

Mr. Conried's degree was bestowed upon him the same day that honors were being bestowed on Mr. Taft. Unfortunately, the Herr Director was obliged to leave before the ceremonies were over, so Mr. Taft offered to change seats with him, taking the front position, thus letting Conried sit behind him. "I think I can cover your retreat," said the future President! On Mr. Taft's election, Conried sent him a congratulatory telegram. At heart he was a Republican, though most of the time he forgot to register.

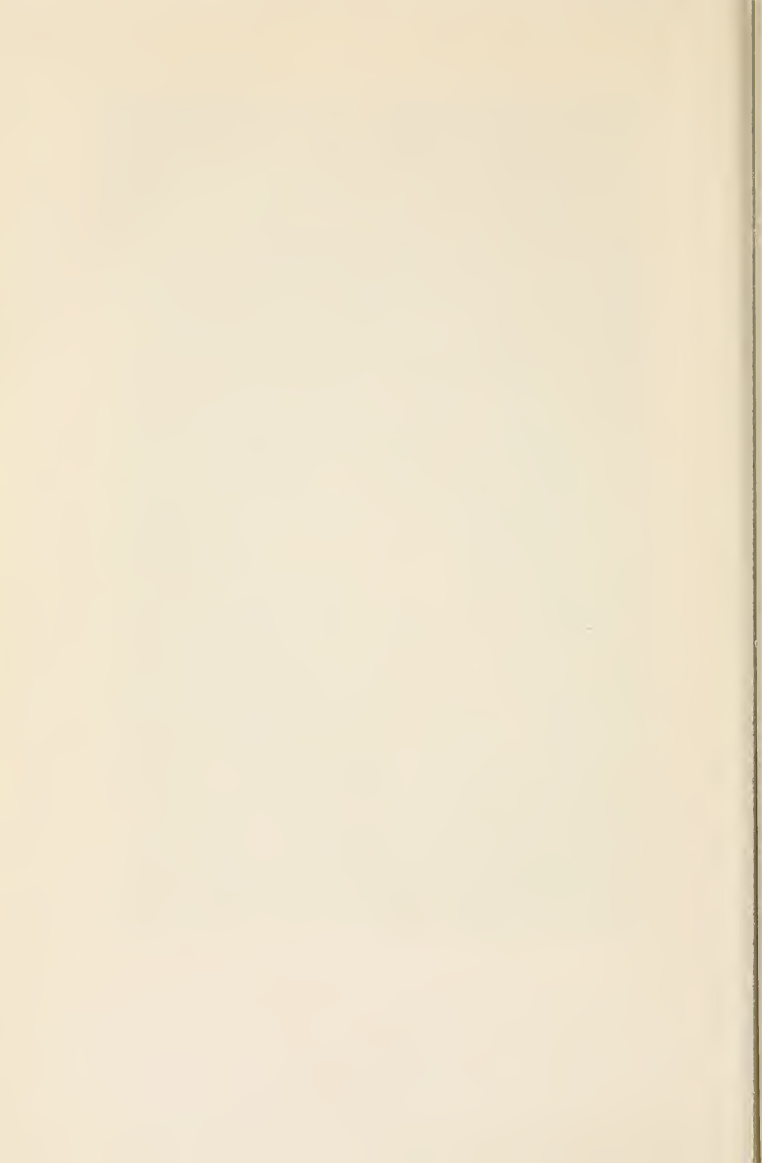
When the honorary degree was conferred upon him, February 22, 1902, the then Provost of the University, Dr. Harrison, acted in behalf of the Board of Trustees, while Mr. Conried, in the regulation cap and gown, was presented by the late Dr. Horace Howard Furness, the Shakespearian scholar, who said in his introductory:

"We have invited to be here present on this occasion Heinrich Conried.

"Because, through many weary years he has



HEINRICH CONRIED, M. A. (PENN.)



never allowed the indifference or hostility of others to weaken his faith in the refining, elevating, purifying influence of the drama, when only what is noblest, purest and best therein is presented on the stage; and to this end he has kept bravely and unflinchingly before him an exalted standard of excellence in every department pertaining to the theatre. He has lived to see his faith justified, his self-sacrifice appreciated, and to find

‘Stubborn thistles bursting
Into glossy purples, which out-redden
All voluptuous garden-roses.’

“Therefore, we present him to the Provost that he may receive the Academic Degree of Master of Arts.”

The University of Pennsylvania* was the first educational institution to benefit by performances of this kind, for, on December 5, 1899, “Minna von Barnhelm” was presented in Philadelphia, representative of the classical period of German drama; and, on March 21, 1900, Fulda’s “Jugendfreunde” was given, as

* Mr. Conried lectured at the University on “Die Deutsche Bühne.” For an account of the “Conried Plays and the German Publication Fund of America,” reprinted in pamphlet form by Dr. Learned, see the *University of Pennsylvania Bulletin*, April, 1900.

example of the contemporaneous nineteenth century German drama.*

Mr. Conried's services were regarded by the University of Pennsylvania as of unique value; the review of them ends in this manner:

"The effect of these plays upon the University and the English-speaking people of Philadelphia is manifest in the new interest in German drama, and these artistic performances by Mr. Conried's company, of the best German drama, furnish a timely illustration for the work of the German Seminary, which has devoted the entire year to the 'History of the German Drama.' Any revival of interest growing therefrom must owe much to the efforts of the Manager of the Irving Place Theatre of New York.

"The importance of such artistic dramatic performances as an agency in academic education has never been duly recognized by our American colleges and universities; and this new stimulus which Mr. Conried has given to the student . . . is likely to bear fruit in a more intelligent attention to the academic study of the drama and the stage in America."

* For the better understanding of the English public, the University issued a translation of the Fulda play: "Friends of Youth," by Martin Schütze, Ph.D., Philadelphia, 1900.

Mr. Conried likewise went to Cornell University as the guest of Professor W. T. Hewitt, and delivered his lecture on "The German Stage," due very largely to friendship with Miss Ottilie Herholz, who was head of the German Department at the time. He also lectured at Vassar in February, 1901, on "The Difficulties of Presenting Plays on the Stage," and in February, 1903, on "The Modern Drama." The Secretary of the College states she is of the impression that some of the Vassar students made a trip to New York at the invitation of Mr. Conried to visit his theatre. Lectures are also known to have been delivered before the Stern School of Languages, and at the College of the City of New York.

In the history of the stage in America, this activity on the part of Mr. Conried is unique; his talent, his artistry won him distinction from the cultivated classes in New York; they likewise brought him recognition from those outside of New York. In his indefatigableness as a worker, he approached Augustin Daly; but he stands alone in the support he received from the intelligent classes throughout the United States.

It is a curious and a deplorable fact that the theatre in America is almost entirely divorced

from the intellectual life of the people. In England we find literary men and men of the theatre exchanging ideas and deeply concerned about each other's work. In America the theatre does not demand the taste and refinement, even the ordinary education, required in the other arts, and, on a first night, American men of letters are only rarely seen in the theatre. As I have said, Mr. Conried had the advantage of imposing upon the Irving Place Theatre the traditions of a repertory company, and he had literary drama upon which to draw. He also depended for his actors upon foreigners who were brought up in a tradition which made Berlin one of the foremost theatre centres of the world. But, granting all this, Mr. Conried had within him that which was willing to take cognizance of mentality in a community; he also had an innate ambition to excel along serious lines. We cannot take away from the credit of the man by saying that Conried was what he was, as a manager, because he was trained in a school which forced him to be other than himself. It may have been the custom for the theatres abroad to give dramatic festivals, but it was not necessary for Mr. Conried to persist in those festivals, when he knew very well how much more he could make, commercially, by

giving the Germans in New York what they really wanted—inferior German farce.

And this continued interest on his part in the serious side of his work made him continue at all costs his Tuesday evenings, devoted to classical productions. He was a student of the German Theatre, and it was his ambition to have others students also. He never failed to commemorate anniversaries. When, in 1905, Richard Mansfield produced Schiller's "Don Carlos," Conried arranged a revival of the play at the Irving Place, with as much desire to offer in contrast two interpretations, as to celebrate the centenary of the poet's death. When Fulda visited America and lectured, Conried's pride was sincere, however much papers hinted that it was good business to exploit the dramatist for the sake of his plays. No one can deny him theatrical intelligence of the highest order.

Within recent years the theatre in America has been able to show no ambition more commendable than Mr. Conried's. Now and again Richard Mansfield used to lecture before the colleges, and even now, whenever William Archer and Henry Arthur Jones visit America, they are invited to talk before learned bodies on subjects imminently close to the theatre. But in no playhouse is there that sense of taste

and high-mindedness which used to be seen at the Irving Place, unless we except Winthrop Ames' Little Theatre, and his attempts in the New Theatre—a failure which was physically weakened by the unwise architectural planning of Mr. Conried himself. I regard Conried as a pioneer in that intelligent attitude toward the theatre which has since then manifested itself in several quarters. What the Yale Dramatic Society has accomplished since its establishment, in the way of serious drama, is what Mr. Conried hoped to do with his collegiate performances: to bring the student body in touch with the best in dramatic literature. What Professor Brander Matthews accomplished during the final period of the New Theatre's existence, when he gave lectures on the different periods in English drama, illustrated by scenes from the plays done by the New Theatre company in the manner of the time, Mr. Conried hoped to accomplish by his Saturday morning lectures at the Irving Place.

His contributions of money for the establishment of special collections of books, and for the extension of museums, suggest those possibilities which others are only slowly following. When an actor to-day is asked to go to Berkeley, California, for a special performance in

the Greek Theatre, he has to consider the financial outlay. Yet Conried used to do the same serious work without a Greek Theatre, shouldering the expense himself. And in the public Press he was accused of coveting the prestige of college patronage, and of striving by his *grande largesse* to win over the English-speaking public for his theatre.

This counter-criticism did not take away from the credit which was his. Those who were watching him in Germany began to regard him as an authority on educational matters in the United States, inasmuch as he was in such close touch with the schools and colleges. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Empress of Germany "commanding" Herr Conried to prepare for her a short account of education for girls in the United States. The data furnished Her Majesty was compiled through personal investigation, and was sent to her in printed form.

It would seem only natural that, from the time Mr. Conried gave thoughts to opera management, his activity at the Irving Place should materially decrease; but this was not to be the case for several years after his appointment as Impresario. During the season of 1901-02, he made great preparations for the reception

of Prince Henry of Prussia, and everything was properly arranged for a gala performance of "Im weissen Ross'l" on the evening of February 22, 1902. The specially engrossed invitations and the programmes printed on white satin are only two of the small details which Mr. Conried attended to, in order to make the occasion a distinctive one. But when the evening arrived, the Prince was forced to go to Washington on official business, and so the real "gala" night was reserved for just before he sailed back to Germany. The consequence was that, though the evening was kept gala, there was no Prince, and there was no "At the White Horse Tavern," inasmuch as the performance was changed to "A Blank Page." In the royal box sat the officers of the royal yacht *Hohenzollern*, which had arrived ahead of time, the German Ambassador, and the Consul-General; while in the audience were Mayor Low, Colonel Bingham, James A. Hill (representing President Roosevelt), Rear-Admiral Evans, and General Corbin.

It was during this evening that Mr. Conried went on the stage and addressed his audience. He told them that those who did not wish to remain might have their money refunded, while those that did stay might consider themselves

his guests. Then, looking about him, with half a twinkle, but likewise with some bitterness in his tone of voice, he said: "How good it is to see you all dressed so gaily—in your evening gowns and dress-suits! Ordinarily, our German audiences are dowdy and ill-dressed. A husband is asked by his wife to go with her to the theatre. 'I'm too tired to dress,' he exclaims. 'But I mean the German Theatre,' she explains. 'Ah, that's another matter. Sure, I'll go just as I am,' he says, with a sigh of relief."

When the Prince did eventually reach New York and was entertained by Mr. Conried, in token of his esteem he presented the manager with a handsome gold cigarette-case, carrying the Princely arms.

At last the performance of "At the White Horse Tavern" was given, the Prince particularly wanting to see that comedy, inasmuch as he had missed it in Germany. After the play, he was taken behind the scenes, and Mr. Conried offered him a cigar, but his Highness refused, pointing to a sign which forbade smoking. "If you'll break your own rules first," he said jovially, "I'll follow your lead, but not before." And so the Director had to lead the way. An interchange of courtesies followed this gala night at the Irving Place Theatre,

and Mr. Conried was invited aboard the royal yacht, where he received formal thanks for what he had done. He and the Prince had become great friends, the Herr Director attending all private and official functions.

The following month, on March 26th and 29th, Mr. Conried gave evidence of his further artistic ambition by scheduling a production of "Faust," including Parts One and Two.

No sooner had the following season been fairly launched than, out of courtesy to the actors and actresses in New York, the Herr Director gave a special matinée (November 24, 1902), with a programme which included the first act of Björnson's "Beyond Human Power," the fifth act of "The Night of St. Bartholomew," in which he played *King Charles*, and the second act of "Alt Heidelberg." The latter was, as we have said, one of the few plays which forced the manager's hand, and made him succumb to the prevalent theatrical custom of "long runs" in the theatre.

After the first presentation of von Moser's "The Bureaucrat," and after Benno Jacobson's "The Trick," from which the English farce "Never Again" was taken, Ferdinand Bonn occupied the stage of the Irving Place Theatre, with his brawny, blond and sentimental *Ham-*

let. The performance was heavy and melodramatic, with poor scenery. This was quickly followed by Philippi's "The Great Light," and a series of plays already mentioned, wherein Bonn made a better impression than his repertory. The season closed with the appearance of the Forenczy Opera Company, an organization which came to New York for the first time.

American theatregoers who, during the season of 1902-3, had had an opportunity of witnessing Mrs. Patrick Campbell's "The Joy of Living," were again offered an outlet for comparison with Camilla Dalberg's interpretation at the Irving Place, of the rôle of *Beata*, on October 1, 1903. On December 17, 1903, Mr. Conried forestalled the American managers with a production of Maeterlinck's "Monna Vanna," over which there had been such a furor in England when the Censor refused to license it for the English stage. As an indication of how completely engrossed was Mr. Conried with the German stage, to the exclusion of any other, it is interesting to note that he thought "Monna Vanna" was the product of a German playwright. The following letter gives a bit of interesting stage history which it is well to record:

Capri, Schweizerhof,
August 11, 1902.

ESTEEMED DIRECTOR:

Director Hofmann was very kind to write you so cordially about me and my work, and he has himself taken the piece for production in Cologne.

There appears to be some error on your part. For "Monna Vanna" is not my piece, but the newest drama of Maurice Maeterlinck, the French-Flemish poet, who is already well known in America, and who lives somewhere in your neighborhood, in Gruchet-Saint-Siméon, near Lunéray, Seine Inférieure, France.

I am sending you a copy of the French original by second-class mail. You will see from the notices that it had its successful opening night on May 17th of this year, at the Nouveau Theatre, in Paris, and is already protected in America. I myself only have the right of translation and production in German, and must pay the author half of my profits. I have already disposed of the rights to ten theatres, among them the Vienna, Hofburg, Berlin Deutsches, the Cologne, Hamburg, and Munich playhouses, etc. It will please me if you will join this list.

Financially as my share I receive every-

where . . . ten per cent. of the receipts. I will, however, be willing to meet you in every way, and will give you the exclusive rights of staging "Monna Vanna" at the Irving Place Theatre for eight per cent. of the receipts, and I hope after your return to America for a prompt remittance of a contract. . . .

The stage rights for England and America (in the English language) M. Maurice Maeterlinck alone can dispose of; as far as I know, this was arranged a long time ago; the piece has already been given in London, and a sharp argument has arisen over it, as reported in all the English and American papers [see the New York *Evening Post* of July 17th]. The English translator is Maeterlinck's friend, Alfred Sutro.

Unfortunately, I cannot now send you a German copy, as the play is in proof; but I hope by the end of August to send a copy to your theatre in New York, so that you can have it by the first of September. The stage copy has been finished by me in collaboration with Herr Director Dr. Schlenther, of the Hofburg Theater; this will give you sufficient guarantee that the German text is coincident [or exact] with the French. As a book, "Monna Vanna" will not appear in German until Janu-

ary 1. At present I have only had one hundred stage copies printed. . . .

Most respectfully,

FRIEDRICH VON OPPELN BRONIKOWSKI.

Mr. Conried associated himself with the Metropolitan Opera House in February, 1903, after which he may be regarded as a manager with divided interests. But, as I have said, he still maintained a firm grip on the affairs of the Irving Place Theatre. When he returned from Europe, during the summer of 1903, and thereafter for several seasons, it was through him that the German Press received the yearly plans; and during his trips abroad his attention was largely concerned with attractions and "stars" for his playhouse. During 1904-05, Frl. Agathe Barsescu was the guest at the German Theatre, appearing in Grillparzer's "Medea," Sudermann's "Heimat," and Grillparzer's "Sappho," among other pieces.

About the same time, Herr Harry Walden appeared in Fulda's version of Rostand's "Les Romanesques," and Gorki's "Nachtasyl." Mr. Conried had to meet the many questions put him in the German Press as to the future management of the Irving Place Theatre, as well as attend to a suit instigated against him by Gustav v. Seyffertitz, who claimed the bulk of very

large profits made at his own benefit. Toward the end of the season, Ferdinand Bonn and Rudolph Christians accepted "guesting" engagements, and they appeared together in Kadelburg's "Der Familientag." A gala occasion was that when the patrons of the Irving Place Theatre were given a "star" performance of "Don Carlos," with Frl. Barsescu as *Princess Eboli*, Herr Bonn as *King Philipp*, Herr Walden as *Carlos*, and Herr Christians as the *Marquis Posa*. The next evening, Herr Bonn appeared in "Wallenstein," supported by Barsescu and Christians. Then followed Christians in "Die berühmte Frau." And finally Frl. Barsescu appeared in the title rôle of "Maria Stuart."

This serves as an excellent illustration of the manner in which the casts were varied at the Irving Place, so as to give the actor scope and variety. And in no way was there any abatement of this policy, even in minor casts. There was no audience in New York City to compare, in intellectual willingness, with the Germans, who, week after week, were served with strong diet by Manager Conried; no audience so willing to support the classics as they. The announcement of "Maria Stuart," of Goethe's "Iphigenie auf Tauris," of an entire "Schiller-

woche," was of common occurrence. We note morning matinées, beginning at ten o'clock for the benefit of German students. For the final week of the season, we are offered Sardou's "Fedora," as a benefit for Frl. Barsescu; "Käbale und Liebe"; Sudermann's "Das Glück im Winkel," for Otto Ottbert's benefit; "Bocksprünge," for the benefit of Frau Neuendorff; "Heimat"; and finally "Das Stiftungsfest."

This season of 1904-05 is representative of the season that followed. During 1905-06, Lina Abarbanell joined Mr. Conried's artists, and he extracted the promise of a visit from Ludwig Fulda. The Impresario-Manager's interests were likewise involved in the establishment of a National Theatre, which shall receive our later consideration. Operetta was mingled with drama, and Mr. Conried had a controversy in court with Commissioner Bingham regarding the concerts given at the Irving Place on Sunday evenings, in violation of the New York Sunday law. Fulda's arrival in February, 1906, lent added interest to his new piece, "Maskerade," and the German author was fêted everywhere. Herr Fulda's appreciation of Conried may be seen from the following letter to Mr. Richard Conried, dated from Berlin, May 10, 1913:

DEAR MR. CONRIED:

I comply with your desire, for I retain a true and grateful memory of your father. The reception he gave me during my visit to New York in 1906 was as warm and pleasant as could be, and I was thoroughly convinced at that time how great were his services in the support of German dramatic art. Under his direction I saw two of my pieces in excellent production, and later on had sufficient reason to deplore the loss here of his skilful and energetic hand, as well as his fiery spirit, now lost to the German theatre.

In personal intercourse with him, especially during our voyage together to Europe, right after the San Francisco earthquake, which had hurt him so much, I learned to know him as a warm-hearted man, enthusiastic over everything beautiful, and to appreciate his stimulating companionship. And I was convinced that they did not know him who regarded him only as a thoroughly unscrupulous business man. I consider it a great loss that he could not execute his last favorite idea of giving the Americans a National Theatre. He would have been destined, as no other man, to bring this difficult undertaking to a successful issue, and to create in America an artistic stage such

as does not now exist. It was this great plan which kept him busy during our intercourse, and I shall never forget the many hours we spent together, while he explained the details of his undertaking to me. May you succeed in placing in his portrait which you purpose to have made of him the good which he has done for America and Germany, and may it be brought forth in the right light.

With best wishes, I am,

Yours respectfully,

LUDWIG FULDA.

Although Mr. Conried's actual tenure of office, as Director of the Irving Place, did not expire until April, 1907, it is very evident that his time was more deeply engrossed with Metropolitan Opera affairs than with his theatre, although his associates kept him thoroughly informed as to every detail. He conducted his work with thoroughness.

"Oh, yes, he was very strict," said Mr. von Seyffertitz in reminiscence. "My God, how actors hated him and loved him! He had a sweet nature and was very emotional. He was way above any German manager we ever had in New York, as far as gentlemanly qualities

and artistic ideals were concerned. He was a great disciplinarian and an exceptional stage-manager. He had ideas, and was not slavishly held by rules, like most of our managers. He really had marked originality.

"From the time I came over with Sorma, and made my first appearance in 'Königskinder,' I had an opportunity of watching Mr. Conried closely, and, though he had his faults, though he was inclined to be close-fisted with his actors, he had his excellencies, God bless him! He possessed the genius for surrounding himself with those who could best serve him. He had a charming personality, and could always make you feel it when he wanted to. But he could treat people as mere nothings in the scheme of things, if they did not serve him, and he happened at the moment not to be in the best of humor. Though he might receive benefits from others, he never stooped for them.

"He was a good son, a wonderful husband, a genial host, and a keen Director, with a dramatic instinct which was excellently developed. But in the theatre there was no god above Conried. I had cause to realize this while I was placed in nominal charge of the Irving Place Theatre. Sometimes he quite took our breath away by his consideration; he

was often up to fun, as when he gave us a Christmas tree in true German fashion, and had a present for every actor in his company.

"The splendid thing about him," claimed Mrs. Nahan Francko (Miss Braga), "was that, when he encouraged you, you believed in him explicitly."

"But in many directions, Mr. Conried had no control over himself," Mr. von Seyffertitz said. "For instance, food meant much to him. At a dinner he would declare that he could not touch a certain dish, because the doctor had prohibited it, and then the next second he would fill himself up with some Austrian dish just as pernicious to the digestion. He was a great man for signing contracts, and was most clever in his arrangements. But at the Metropolitan Opera House, he allowed business affairs often to assume dangerous proportions.

"Personally, I have never believed in a German Theatre for New York. Why should there be such an institution in America, except for the sake of sentiment? As far as that goes, it is fine, but otherwise it is a hopeless proposition. Mr. Conried had the ability to withstand any prejudice against his theatre.

"As an actor, he had exceptional ability, but I remember that whenever he acted he was sea-

sick; he was unable to check his nervousness and excitement."

"He was all fire and flame," writes Mrs. Francko, "after which there was always a drop—a dreadful reaction."

"I had been associated with Mr. Conried for some time previous to my engagement at the Irving Place Theatre," said Mr. Adolph Link, in conversation, "and had met him in Vienna, when he had long hair *à la* Lewinsky. I was with him on the Bowery when our biggest hit was 'The Merry War,' and when I created the rôle of the waiter in 'Divorçons,' inventing all the conventional stage business now held as tradition. Then I left him, and went over to Amberg; but even then I had to admit the cleverness of Conried as a Director.

"When I returned to him, in 1893, I found him even more autocratic than ever, but always diplomatic in the handling of his actors. He never used a book at rehearsal, for he usually knew the entire play by heart. In 1894, he began to be sociable in his home, 246 West 39th Street, where young Conried was born. He had open house, always serving five-o'clock tea; on this occasion a few of the actors would entertain his guests with small bits from their parts. I remember he used to go about in a

carriage with rubber wheels, and he always had a fine pair of horses.

"Not many of Conried's actors really knew him; they did not have the opportunity, for, after success came to the Director, he suddenly grew too big to notice them! When on the stage, he always tried to be friendly, but a few minutes after, when you passed him in the hall, he would go by without even a friendly headshake; he never seemed to have time to speak sociably to his actors.

"Mr. Conried belonged to the Deutsche Bühnenverein, a society formed in Berlin for the protection of the theatre managers. The latter often advanced money to actors who never turned up to fill their engagements. I have been told that Mr. Conried's books are filled with debts of this character. Heinrich Conried prosecuted many an actor in foreign courts; and this was another reason why the profession did not like him. Then his agents had a grievance against him because they found him too astute to engage 'dead wood.' And it was partly because of this that actors much preferred to deal directly with Conried than through such agents as Ledner, Tänzer, Levy, Felix and Bloch.

"How often, at the Philosopher's Table at

Fleischmann's, have I seen him dominate the occasion, and then go out into the street and fail to bow to some passing friend. On meeting him the next time, Conried would say, 'You must really excuse me, but I had philosophy on the brain.' People thought that Conried purposely cut them, but he did not; he was in the habit of passing his own son without recognition. How particular he was behind his stage! All hands, all actors, were obliged to keep their hats off, and if a stranger by any chance was found where he shouldn't be, he was uncereemoniously hustled off. Conried made his own law: 'Who has nothing to do on the stage, should not be on the stage,' was one of his adages. He had set hours for everything, and an electric button attached to his desk in his office summoned the actors to him when he wanted them. I do not believe we ever gave a slovenly performance at the Irving Place Theatre, and the high excellence of the productions was largely, if not wholly, due to the workmanship of Mr. Conried."

These few impressions from members of his company add a little more to the portrait of Conried as a theatrical manager. But there is still one more phase which we must consider before we pass to the Metropolitan Opera

House. A few business details will be typical of Conried as something other than the artistic director. His problem was more complicated than that of the ordinary theatrical manager, for his actors came from Germany, and their contracts called for transportation back and forth. He was the first manager to consider the rights of German authors, and to protect them, as far as possible, despite the weakness of American copyright law. Bundles and bundles of contracts are in my possession, and they throw light upon the activity of the manager when he went abroad—the wide range of his interests,—for it must be remembered that never, during his lifetime, did he relinquish his powers as agent for foreign authors and composers. So that, when the time came for him to go abroad in the interests of the Metropolitan Opera House, he was well trained in the matter of artists and dealings with them.

In April of the year 1901, Mr. Conried found himself involved in a lawsuit with the music firm of Witmark, of New York City, the complication arising from the claim on both sides that they were the licensed agents for Johann Strauss, who composed the numberless well-known German operas made famous in Europe, and exploited in this country by Mr. Conried

himself. According to the latter's affidavit, on the 15th of January, 1884, he entered into agreement of sale for a valuable consideration, wherein the composer sold to Mr. Conried all of his work, written and composed by him personally, or in collaboration with other people. It was claimed by Mr. Conried that M. Witmark & Sons, without his consent, had assumed ownership of the said operas, which included such valuable pieces of property as "A Night in Venice," "The Bat" (translation of "Die Fledermaus"), "Gypsy Baron," "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," "The Merry War," "Simplicius" and "Indigo." In other words, the whole case hinged on the moral rights to these operas, as exercised by the terms of the original understanding between Conried and Herr Strauss himself. After a very searching examination into the matter, the case went against Mr. Conried, although it was pretty evident to those who followed the points that there was a thorough understanding of Mr. Conried's legitimate control of the rights to these operas in America.

Complications likewise ensued in the matter of the operas by Karl Milloecker, wherein the Witmark agency again claimed that they were the sole representatives of the widow of the author of "The Beggar Student."

As early as April 23, 1898, there was every indication that Mr. Conried intended to transfer his Irving Place Theatre to a point more centrally located in the theatrical district of New York City. A site was actually selected, at the corner of Broadway, Forty-seventh Street and Seventh Avenue, and an architect, Mr. E. Yancey Cohen, was engaged to draw up plans for the building, which was to be modeled after the Imperial Opera House in Vienna. This was the first suggestion that the New York theatregoers had of Mr. Conried's strong desire to establish in the city a theatre supported by a definite subscription audience. Plans and specifications were again offered to Mr. Conried by a building company of New York, in December, 1902, for a twelve-story, fire-proof building, to be used for hotel and theatre purposes, on the west side of Madison Avenue, between Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth Streets, the approximate cost of the building to be \$1,100,000. Actual negotiations were entered into for the purchase of the property. But, as events turned out, the Irving Place Theatre was destined to remain on its old site as long as Mr. Conried directed its well-being.

Mr. Conried, in the spring of 1903, was again brought into the courts, the widow of composer

Strauss again claiming that he had no rights to the operas or operettas composed by her husband. This case had extended over a number of years in the courts, and had involved the Witmark dispute. In Austria, on December 11, 1900, in the Imperial and Royal Landesgericht, at Bruenn, the case was tried and decided in favor of Frau Strauss. It was judged that Mr. Conried had acquired no rights of ownership, but only the rights to produce in German and English in the United States, Canada, England, and Australia, these rights to expire on March 15, 1899. The second step was Mr. Conried's appeal of the case to the Imperial and Royal Ober-Landesgericht, on March 26, 1902. The decision again went against Mr. Conried, who was obliged to pay the costs. The final step in the dispute was another appeal that Mr. Conried made before the Supreme Tribunal of the Austrian Empire in Civil Causes. A decision was rendered against him again on June 17, 1902, and this was considered final. Mr. Conried's hands were tied in perpetual restraint.

We have thus traced in detail Mr. Conried's influence at the Irving Place Theatre, because in many ways it served its inestimable purpose, and with the recent advent of Herr Emanuel

Reicher to America, coming with the hope of improving American taste and establishing what he liked to call a "People's Theatre," we have to hark back to the very excellent régime Herr Conried maintained during the entire period he was director of his German house. The American English-speaking public were unable to witness "The Weavers" in translation until 1915, but those who attended Mr. Conried's performance might boast of his production of the same play ten years before. So, in like manner it would be possible for us to show how advanced Mr. Conried's repertory theatre was over and above that of the American playhouses, and how abreast of the times it was in the advanced thought governing most of the distinctive playhouses of Europe.

CHAPTER V

DIRECTORATE OF THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE: Mr. Conried's appointment. The new organization. An Impresario's salary. The singers under his direction. The Impresario's busy life, as exemplified in Mr. Conried's correspondence; and his direct dealings with his "stars." The discovery of Caruso. The jealousies of divas. Preparations for a new season. Orders from an Impresario. Contracts with "stars." Expenses. Caruso as a concert asset. The Pace that Kills.

HENRICH CONRIED'S reputation went far beyond the circle of his immediate patronage, and, when the time came for any large honors to be bestowed upon any particular manager, his name was always to the fore in consideration for possible advancement in the service of the English-speaking public, as well as the German-speaking public. His fame was so generally recognized that the attention of the directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company was drawn to him. When, in the spring of 1903, Mr. Maurice Grau announced his intention of retiring from the directorship of the house, Mr. Conried was put forward as a candidate

for the vacant place. With his usual independent attitude, when the subject was broached to him, he personally refused to become an applicant for the managership, although there is no doubt that in his heart of hearts he relished the possible opportunity of struggling with such a big artistic proposition as this. It was only after he was assured of the unanimous support of the Metropolitan Directors that he consented to have his name put up for consideration.

There were many people who shook their heads with some misgivings, for it is one thing to appoint a man of Conried's experience as the head of a theatre, and it is another thing to make the rather unusual suggestion that the next Director of the Metropolitan Opera House should be a man with no operatic experience to speak of, and with little, or no, distinctive musical taste. Nevertheless, Conried often exhibited a natural ear for music. As illustration of this, it is told of him how, on one occasion, the leader of an orchestra played the famous Strauss march like a funeral dirge, and Conried called out for him to put more spirit in it—to play it *like* a march. But the leader opposed him; it was not as the "Master" would have it, said the leader. Conried, however, had his way. Some



HEINRICH CONRIED AT HIS DESK IN THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE

time after, while talking with Strauss, Conried mentioned the incident, and asked the composer if he was not right. "I applaud you," said the *Maestro*; "you are the first one to catch my idea!"

When Conried's ardent supporters heard the many doubts expressed as to his fitness, they pointed to his interest in musical affairs from time to time in the past, and emphasized the fact that he had managed successfully the American tour of Bronislaw Hubermann, the violinist, and was instrumental in bringing to this country Ernest Von Schuch, conductor of the Dresden Opera House.

The papers were full of speculation in regard to the candidates who were suggested in competition with Mr. Conried. There were Walter Damrosch, Henry Russell, C. E. Ellis, and George Ellis. Many preliminary details were entered into between the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company and the regisseur of the Irving Place Theatre. On February 14, the Directors decided, by a vote of seven to six, to instruct the Executive Committee to negotiate with Mr. Conried, and on February 15, 1903, it was announced by the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company that the lease of the Opera House had been given to Heinrich

Conried for five years.* At the beginning, Herr Conried's financial supporter was Mr. Henry Morgenthau, later strengthened by the support of Messrs. James H. Hyde and Jacob H. Schiff. The latter was invited to join the Directorate, but he was at the time so pressed with other work that he was obliged to decline, requesting however that a member of his firm, Mr. Otto Kahn, be accepted in his stead—a suggestion to which Mr. Conried readily agreed.

The Conried Opera Company was organized, and acquired all of the rights of the Maurice Grau Opera Company. According to the *Musical Courier* of March 4, 1903, the new organization was incorporated at Albany, with a capital stock of \$150,000, the Directors being James H. Hyde, Otto H. Kahn, Henry Morgenthau, Eliot Gregory, Henry Rogers Winthrop, William H. McIntyre, Heinrich Conried, J. Henry Smith, Clarence H. Mackay, and George J. Gould. Alfred Vanderbilt and Robert Goelet were likewise included, although they soon retired.†

A contract of agreement was drawn up between Mr. Conried and the Conried Metropol-

* See *Harper's Magazine* for 1883: an early description of the Metropolitan Opera House. Also an article on Opera, by W. J. Henderson, in *Review of Reviews*, December, 1904.

† See the *New York Herald*, February 15, 1903.

itan Opera House, fixing the tenure of his office from the 1st of June, 1903, to the 31st of May, 1908. Mr. Conried agreed to manage and supervise everything connected with the operation and administration of affairs relating to the opera, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, or the Board of Directors, including the engaging and dismissing of all artists and employees, for a period of five years. In consideration for his services, he was to receive a salary of \$20,000 a year, it being understood that, in addition to his salary, he was to receive the sum of \$150 for each week while he was actually travelling in Europe in connection with the business of the Metropolitan Opera House. It was also agreed that, as additional compensation for his services, one-half of the profits for each and every year, during the continuance of his tenure of office, was to be paid him, after all expenses were met, together with six per cent. dividends upon all the common stock outstanding and issued and sold for actual cash at par at the time of such payment. This, in the main, covered the points which affected Mr. Conried's salary as head of the Opera House.

Mr. Grau sold the assets of his company to the succeeding one, these properties including

contracts with various singers whom Mr. Grau had engaged for the next season. The German conductor, Alfred Hertz, was retained by Mr. Conried. To the old organization, the new Director added Ackte, Marion Weed, Fremstad, Edyth Walker, Geraldine Farrar, Alois Bergstaller, Heinrich Knote, the conductor—Mottl, and, most important of all, Enrico Caruso.

The matter of an impresario's salary is always of curious interest to the public, and there is no doubt that Mr. Conried's business acuteness did much to increase the actual income which his contract called for. Whether accurate or not, it is enlightening to note the comments of the New York *Evening Sun*, as late as April 27, 1909, when it was pointed out that: "The Impresario's salary of \$20,000, and Conried's annual \$10 benefit, earning \$20,000 more, footed up \$40,000 a year, or \$200,000 for the minimum earnings of Conried's five years in opera. He and his bankers, by contract, were to have half of all the Opera Company's profits which, in their first three years, probably netted him \$150,000 additional, it was said. . . . As the first to put money into his own New Theatre idea, Conried held, with Henry Morgenthau, a claim of \$100,000 in that now completed insti-

tution. He sold to W. K. Vanderbilt, for \$90,000, his interests in opera contracts that had three years to run."

Few positions are so difficult to fill to the satisfaction of everybody as that of an operatic manager. He must defer to the social element among his patrons, as well as to the music lover. He must deal with numbers of singers of various nationalities, all clamoring for special privileges, as we shall see when we come to specific examples of the difficulties confronting Mr. Conried. He scours Europe and America for new singers, and later, perhaps, discovers that an artist who is popular in Paris, London, or the cities of Germany, may be an utter failure in New York. And he then has a contract on his hands which represents so much wasted money.

He must arrange his repertory so as not to give some opera too often on the same day of each week. He must afford the subscribers an opportunity to hear all the singers in various rôles. He must meet the assaults of all his artists, demanding advances in salary each year. He is continually harassed by the "sudden indisposition," by the petty jealousies, quarrels and fierce rivalries of ambitious singers, amply illustrated in correspondence which has been

preserved of Mr. Conried's régime at the Metropolitan Opera House, and which only through his very vigorous handling was he able to cope with adequately. He is continually upset by ultimata delivered at the eleventh hour by highly temperamental artists.

Conried used to say, with considerable grimness of humor, that operatic management was a very much less difficult and complicated affair in the good old times. Then, all the manager had to do was to find a popular Prima Donna, and the problem was solved. When Catalani was remonstrated with for asking so large a sum that it became impossible to engage other artists of talent, her husband cried, "Talent! Have you not Madame Catalani!" "But my subscribers insist on having the world's greatest singers," declared Conried, "and stage-management, chorus and orchestra must be equal to those of Bayreuth and Munich. The best is what the public wants. If it costs more, who cares?"

Since his public wanted the best, Herr Conried gave it to them. Under his management, the Metropolitan Opera House became equal to any of the great European houses. In fact, in matter of brilliancy of principals, it has not been surpassed since that time. To him the American public owes the introduction of five

of the most eminent of living singers. Besides the new operas produced under his régime, he, by new scenery, costuming and expert stage-management in all its details, practically re-created various other productions. During his entire five years of management, a performance was never repeated on a subscription night, and only once was a production changed after its announcement.*

Mr. Conried attacked the proposition he had in hand without any unnecessary delay. "I will not touch the management," he said, "unless you give me a decent stage to work with." The Directors were much impressed. His immediate official action was an order for the re-decoration of the house in red and gold, his instinct for changes even in these matters being rarely found at fault.

When he went abroad for the purpose of arranging his first season, he had fully determined to break through the traditions of Bayreuth, and he startled the American people by making the announcement that it was his intention to produce "Parsifal," whether or not the Wagner family gave their consent. It was this determination which prompted him to make

* "Metropolitan Opera House of New York," by H. E. Krehbiel, in *The Musician*, February, 1907, page 81.

certain material changes in the technical outfit of the Metropolitan Opera House, enlarging the stage, and putting in paraphernalia which would help the illusion "Parsifal" might require. Mr. Conried introduced a system of counter-weights in the "flies," where heretofore men had done the work of lifting scenery. There is no doubt that many of the innovations thus instituted by him made it possible for further productions of a stupendous character to be carried on.

During his régime he had, as his business manager, Mr. Ernest Goerlitz, who, through the season of 1903-04, likewise was business agent for the Irving Place Theatre. Conried proceeded to make his announcements of plans, and it was always his custom to give detailed statements to the Press when he returned at the end of every European trip. During the five seasons that he was in active charge of affairs at the Metropolitan, he gave for 1903-04, twenty-seven different operas; for 1904-05, thirty-two different operas; for 1905-06, thirty-two different operas; for 1906-07, twenty-eight different operas; for 1907-08, thirty-one. A comprehensive survey of Mr. Conried's tenure of office, none too sympathetic and often grudging in its praise, is that recorded by Mr. Henry

Krehbiel, in his "Chapters of Opera," wherein, after claiming that Mr. Grau had arranged for the appearance of Caruso, Mottl and Fremstad, asserting at the same time that Grau was holding Miss Farrar in reserve, he continues: "A dozen of the singers who were continuously employed throughout the Conried period had already established themselves in public favor when his régime opened. They were Mme. Sembrich, Mme. Eames (who was absent during his first year), Mme. Homer, and Messrs. Burgstaller, Dippel, Reiss, Mühlmann, Scotti, Van Rooy, Blas, Journet, Plançon, and Rossi. To these Mr. Conried associated Caruso, Marion Weed, Olive Fremstad, Edyth Walker, Ernst Kraus (the tenor who had been a member of one of Mr. Damrosch's companies), Fran Naval, Giuseppe Campanari, Goritz, and a few people of minor importance. Miss Weed and Miss Fremstad and Messrs. Caruso and Goritz became fixtures in the institution; Miss Walker remained three years; Herr Kraus and Herr Naval only one season. The second season witnessed the accession of Bella Alten, Mme. Senger-Bettaque (who dated back to the German régime), Mme. Eames (returned), Signora De Macchi (an Italian singer whose failure was so emphatic that her activity ended almost

as soon as it began), Mme. Melba (for one season), Mme. Nordica (for two seasons), Josephine Jacoby (for the rest of the term), and a couple more inconsequential fillers-in. The third year brought Signorina Boninsegna (who I believe had a single appearance), Lina Cavalieri (who endured to the end), Geraldine Farrar (still with the company and bearer of high hopes on the part of opera lovers for the future), Bessie Abott (a winsome singer of extremely light calibre), Marie Mattfeld (an acquaintance of the Damrosch days), Mme. Schumann-Heink (returned for a single season), Marie Rappold, Mme. Kirkby-Lunn, Carl Burrian, Soubeyran, and Rousselière, tenors; Stracciari, baritone, and Chalmin and Navarini, basses. The last of German dramatic sopranos was augmented in the last year by Mme. Morena and Mme. Leffler-Burkhardt, the tenors by Bonci (who had been brought to America the year before as opposition to Caruso by Mr. Hammerstein), Riccardo Martin (an American), George Lucas; the basses by Theodore Chaliapine, a Russian, and a buffo, Barocchi. Among the engagements of the first season which gave rise to high hopes in serious and informed circles was that of Felix Mottl, as conductor of the German operas and Sunday night concerts

(which it was announced were to be given a symphonic character and dignity), Anton Fuchs, of Munich, as stage-manager, and Carl Lautenschläger, of the Prinz Regenten Theater, Munich, as stage mechanician, or technical director. These two men did notable work in 'Parsifal,' but in everything else found themselves so hampered by the prevailing conditions that after a year they retired to Germany, oppressed with a feeling something akin to humiliation. Likewise, Herr Mottl, who made an effort in the line of symphony concerts on the first Sunday night of the season, and then withdrew, to leave the field open to the old-fashioned popular operatic concert, which Mr. Conried commanded and the public unquestionably desired. His experiences in putting half-prepared operas on the stage also discouraged Herr Mottl, and he went through the season in a perfunctory manner, and departed, shaking the Metropolitan dust from his feet, and promptly installed his polished boots in the directorship of the Royal Court Theater at Munich."

The new Impresario succeeded to a machine in good working order; he likewise succeeded, as we judge by Mr. Krehbiel's statement, to agreements with artists who were already estab-

lished as popular favorites. And the public was in high good humor in regard to his appointment, inasmuch as Conried's reputation for perfect staging and artistic thoroughness had been well justified by many of the plays given at the Irving Place Theatre. He entered upon his duties as Impresario with a tremendous amount of vigor, which fully justified the confidence in him.

The first season compassed fifteen weeks, within which period there were given ninety-seven performances of twenty-seven operas. Conried's policy tended to reduce the French element which Grau had emphasized, and there is little doubt that this change on his part was prompted very largely by his desire to exploit Caruso, the force of his season being largely expended in the direction of Italian opera. Influence was also exerted by the box-holders to reduce the number of German operas, at least during the subscription season. The whole attitude of the supporting clientele was reactionary and, rightly or wrongly, Mr. Conried yielded in their favor to some extent. Whatever new and sensational features he wished to introduce into his repertory he reserved for special performances which were not subscription ones.

To the administration of his work, Mr. Conried brought the iron hand of discipline which he had exerted so persistently at the Irving Place Theatre, and which resulted in a successful policy, however much it may have likewise resulted in his being disliked by many members of his company. His attitude toward the temperamental opera singers was equally as stern, and resulted in many curious disputes, and often very peremptory correspondence.

There is no doubt that the Impresario * lives a pace that kills. Few men have the constitution to survive the wear and tear and strain of Grand Opera Management. For, not only are they kept at a tension at home, but in the competitive search for "stars," they become the scourge of Europe, binding the great singers with contracts that will keep them away from Continental cities during the operatic seasons. Their summers are spent in exciting journeys from town to town, testing voices, and arranging for the release of singers connected with the Municipal Opera Houses of Germany or elsewhere.

There is little rest for the Impresario from year to year. His ingenuity is eternally taxed.

* Mr. Conried disliked the word "Impresario," but I am using it as the only term fitted to contrast with "Director," used during his Irving Place days.

No wonder, therefore, that we find him a wreck at the time of his retirement. Maurice Grau and Heinrich Conried were both obliged to relinquish their executive duties, very largely because their constitutions were undermined by the work, and they scarcely survived their resignations a twelve month.

Grand Opera is supported by society. It is a social function concentrated in a diamond horseshoe of the rich. To please such a clientele, the Impresario has to gather around him the best in the way of music that the world affords. Under Grau and Conried, Grand Opera became an assemblage of "stars," engaged at an enormous cost. This resulted in great care and attention being bestowed almost entirely upon the excellencies of the individual singer, to the neglect of the ensemble.

Seated in his office at the Metropolitan Opera House, the Impresario has a network of communications spreading everywhere throughout the building. He employs alert agents abroad, who are on the lookout for members of the chorus. The contract with these agents usually designates so many German singers, so many French singers, and so many Italians needed for the season. He has his Press Representative, who keeps the newspapers informed as to

the slightest variation in operative temperature. And, as he sits at his desk, he has to be ready at a moment's notice to readjust all of his plans because of the vagary of some singer. He has to hold a firm hand over the head of recalcitrant artists. He is obliged to attend rehearsals, and to listen to reports from the enormous artistic staff that looks toward him for instruction or correction.

They are all clamoring for the Impresario—the stage carpenter, costumers, members of the corps de ballet, the chorus, among whom the Impresario often has to wander during a performance, the technical director, and the property-master. His hand must be upon the pulse of every department; he must know what the general business-manager and his assistants are doing; the chief electrician, the various stage-managers, the chorus-master and the ballet-master—all have their woes to relate; and there are the varied complications that arise from exacting musical conductors.

As if that were not enough, the Impresario attends the long and tedious rehearsals day in and day out, sometimes lasting from eleven in the morning until seven in the evening. "Oh," said Mr. Caruso, "it is true that I get \$2,000

a performance, but think of the rehearsals! I have to work for my money."

Scarcely has the season closed, than the Impresario is on the boat, bound for the other side. He has already set in motion the wheels for the next season, having signed contracts with members of his old company. And now he is on his annual hunt for novelties. Oscar Hammerstein was the first American Impresario of modern times to upset traditions, to secure novelties of a lighter and more revolutionary order, which the Metropolitan, from its conservative point of view, would never have thought of offering. Hammerstein had the faculty of finding more new singers—not always of first rank—than any other of his associates in the business of Grand Opera, and it was he who broke up the opera monopoly, making it possible for other cities, like Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, to have their own opera seasons, without being dependent upon the generosity of the Metropolitan.

This was the condition when Mr. Hammerstein opened the Manhattan Opera House in competition with the Grand Opera under Mr. Conried's direction. When the latter heard of Hammerstein's entrance into the operatic field,

he hastened to secure exclusive rights to all of Puccini's scores for America. But, as events have shown since that time, aggravated largely by conditions of war, the Philadelphia and Boston Opera Houses have been obliged to close their doors, and even the Century Opera Company, with the desire to give Grand Opera in English, under the patronage and support of many of the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera House, was forced to abandon the scheme, because of the fact that the Metropolitan Opera organization has a monopoly from which there is no escape.

Though the Metropolitan finally bought Hammerstein out, they did not seem to have acquired any of Mr. Hammerstein's modern tastes. It seems very doubtful if, under Conried's régime, he would ever have been temporized with in this manner. There is no telling how many years would have passed before America heard "*Pelléas et Mélisande*," "*Thaïs*," and "*Louise*," had it not been for Hammerstein, although we are assured on good authority that Conried refused such operas because he was convinced they needed an intimate treatment which the size of the Metropolitan prohibited. As an Impresario, Hammerstein seems to have had a constitution of iron, and he bowed to no

man's will but his own. As for Mr. Conried's successor, Signor Giulio Gatti-Casazza,—due to the influence of his conductor, Toscanini, the emphasis has been placed very largely upon Italian opera, encouraged further by the popularity of Caruso and Farrar. The German opera, while being maintained, has not called forth any great exponent. The fact of the matter is, it is rarely the case that a tenor, like Jean de Reszke, can appear with equal success in French, German, and Italian opera; certainly Caruso cannot. On the other hand, Signor Gatti-Casazza, due to the interest in the revolutionary school, as seen in the Russian composers, has been able to present, during his régime, such revolutionary pieces as Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounoff" and Borodin's "Prince Igor,"—a type of opera which Mr. Conried would scarcely have cared to present to the audiences of ten or twelve years past. Thus are we able to measure the change in musical taste and ideals.

During his régime, the Director of the Metropolitan has to consult the pleasure of a Board. It is his ambition to please and placate the stockholders and the boxholders. From them he, at any time, holds himself open to correction. Those who have regular Monday night

seats at the Opera may write him that they are being surfeited with French and Italian opera, that they are not getting as much German opera as they would like. Others may tell him that they are not hearing as great a variety of singers as they were promised in his prospectus. But Hammerstein put himself beyond the pale of such criticism. His subscribers had to take what he wanted. His Opera House was his own.

Morning, noon, and night, the Impresario is besieged by singer candidates. He makes appointments with them for the next day, perhaps. He walks into a room where they are seated, and one by one they are tested and passed over. The Impresario jots down in his little note-book his momentary comments and impressions for further reference. For example, during his trip to Europe in the summer of 1906, Conried wrote: "I do not recollect having heard Miss L., though I do not want to be positive; I have to hear so very many that it may have escaped my memory. My memorandum book is already in my trunk, shipped to New York, and only there can I find some definite statement. One thing I may say, however,—if Miss L. was of extraordinary value, I think I would have remembered it."

He often has to pause and listen to the heart-breaking stories of these candidates, to the tales of dire privation and continued struggle, only to end in failure. In his scouring of Europe for singers, the Impresario has to be very careful in his judgment, for fear that he may overlook some gold-mine. There were many contracts which Conried found in his desk, when he succeeded Grau at the Metropolitan, of which he did not take advantage. In fact, it was purely by accident that he renewed Grau's contract with Caruso. For as we have said, Mr. Conried, when he became Impresario, was ignorant of most musical matters, and had never heard of the great Italian tenor. Here is the true story of his "find."

Mr. Conried went to the Italian consulate in New York, and inquired of the Consul who was the greatest living tenor. The prompt reply was, "Caruso." He next cabled Covent Garden, and across seas came the assurance, "Caruso." Then, one day, so the story continues, he was having his shoes shined. "Who is the greatest Italian tenor living?" he asked the bootblack. And the answer came without hesitation, "Caruso." He rushed down to the Italian Savings Bank, in New York City. "Who is the greatest Italian singer?"

he asked President Francolini. "Caruso, of course," was the reply. "And what is more," the President continued, "the Secretary of this bank, Signor Simonelli, knows Caruso's agent." In this indirect fashion, Conried got in touch with the great Italian tenor.

One morning, soon after he arrived in Europe, Conried and his son were walking the streets of Berlin, when they met Herr Rudolf Christians, who is now the Director of the German Theatre in New York. The latter told Conried he was on his way to a certain Italian restaurant for luncheon, and that he was going there because the proprietor had promised to let him hear a phonographic record of what he considered to be a truly remarkable tenor voice. Everyone, it seemed, was buying these records! The tenor's name was Caruso. The matter dropped from Mr. Conried's mind until he arrived in Paris. He and his son were on the Boulevard des Italiens, when they passed a phonograph store, and, the memory of Caruso once more occurring to Mr. Conried, he dropped in and asked to hear the Caruso record played. It was thus that he first heard the great tenor's voice.

In a conversation with Mr. Caruso, which I had with him in his spacious apartments in

the Knickerbocker Hotel, he continued the story. "When I heard that Grau had resigned," he declared, "I asked my agent to find out whether my contract would hold good with the new Director, whoever he should be. My friend by correspondence was Simonelli, in New York. Through him we heard of Mr. Conried's appointment. The new Impresario asked if I would come to America for ten performances. 'No,' I cabled. 'What I want to know is whether the Grau contract holds good!' Three times, back and forth, we cabled, for I was then in negotiations with Monte Carlo, and the opera houses in South America, where I had gained some of my experience, were wanting me back. Finally Mr. Conried said 'Yes,' and I came,—and here I am."

Grau had missed his opportunity at one time, for, while he was at Covent Garden, in London, he might have engaged Caruso at \$700 an evening, but did not do so. The Grau contract called for \$1,000 a night, to be increased if Caruso were a success. We know the result. From 1903, Signor Caruso has been petted and pampered. The Impresario, the Press Representative, the whole technical staff of the Metropolitan, bow before him, and give in to his wishes. For he has proven himself, from the

beginning of Mr. Conried's régime to the present moment, to be the Opera's greatest financial investment. He was the gold-mine that came to the rescue of Conried when Hammerstein entered the operatic field. The latter secured Bonci, and advertised him as Caruso's rival. But Caruso has no peer, unless in memory there still reigns Jean de Reszke, who exceeds him in the matter of versatility and intellectual grasp. We believe, on the other hand, that Signor Caruso is more lavish and more generous with his voice, through his personal enthusiasm saving himself little during a performance.*

It is interesting to obtain a near and an inside view of the life of an Impresario and, while we will have occasion to refer to Mr. Conried's correspondence in the proper logical order of the different performances, it is well at this moment to go through his private papers and to take therefrom whatever impression may be gained of the stress and strain of that existence of an Impresario which kills. Conditions have changed very little since his régime at the Metropolitan Opera House. Salaries have increased to a certain extent, but the bulk of expenditure of Opera is not any greater than it was then, and the tasks of the Impresario are

* Those who knew Mr. Conried declared that he never thoroughly enjoyed opera unless Caruso sang.

about the same, under normal conditions,—which are always abnormal!

The Impresario needs to be careful of the relative values of his "stars"; there is much jealousy among them as to their standing in public favor. If one is superseded by another in a cast, it often follows that the second singer feels offended because she was not originally selected as the Impresario's first choice. To the Impresario, complaints of this character are constant, and he has to deal with them in a most conciliatory manner. Here is a typical example:

MOST HONORED DIRECTOR:

Yesterday I was persuaded again to sing twice in succession, in order to do you a great favor. In return for that, you have had notices printed in this morning's papers to the effect that, because of the change in the repertoire, on Monday, "Elisir d'Amore" will be given with Caruso and Sembrich, and because of that, the New York public will have the fortune to be able to listen to Caruso once more before his departure. You may, Director, expect much from Caruso, and rightly, too. But Sembrich is Sembrich, and the public comes to hear the opera, "Elisir d'Amore," with Sembrich and

Caruso. I know now that it will be impossible for me to sing four times in two days, especially two days in succession. Therefore, I ask you not to announce me Monday, as under no circumstances can I sing.

With best regards,

Yours respectfully,

MARCELLA SEMBRICH.

The singer, however, is not always forgetful of the Impresario, especially if, through that Impresario, his or her advance has been assured. One of the artists encouraged through the friendly interest of Mr. Conried, was Riccardo Martin, an American boy, who had graduated from Columbia University, New York. From Florence, Italy, on July 26, 1908, after Mr. Conried was stricken with what proved to be his final illness, there arrived this letter of appreciation, relative to Mr. Conried's resignation:

MY DEAR MR. CONRIED:

For some time it has been my intention to write and thank you most sincerely for the photograph which you so kindly left for me in New York, and which I found on my return from the Journée. I thank you most heartily, and greatly appreciate the gift.

“Immer Vorwärts” has always been and shall always be my motto. I came to Italy directly from New York, and have been following Maestro Lombardi around ever since. He has now returned to his home in Florence, and here I hope he will remain until it is time for me to return to America. He has wrought an amelioration in my voice which I consider little short of marvellous. He has given me a facility of emission, a volume of tone, and quality up to the high C and C#, which I did not dream I possessed. I am the only pupil he has consented to receive during his vacation, and my one regret is that I can study with him for so short a time. I am more than ever grateful to Mr. Cottenet, Caruso, Bonci, and Scotti for recommending me to such a wonderful Maestro. If I could only study one year with him! Lombardi is very anxious for me to come back to Italy and sing again in the Italian . . . as he assures me that I also am a 5,000-franc-a-night tenor!

Dear Mr. Conried, please excuse my writing you all this; but I have always felt that you had a personal interest in me and wanted me to succeed. . . .

Gratefully yours,

RICCARDO MARTIN.

The Impresario needs to look after the health of his "stars." He is never certain, until the night of the performance, whether or not he will have to make changes in the cast at the last moment, due to a cold or some slight indisposition. That is why he finds it necessary to have his singers within immediate telephone call of him. Mr. Conried always asked for their day's plans. A regular routine list had to be left at the office of the Metropolitan, so that, at any hour, Mr. Conried might be able to lay his hands on whomsoever he might suddenly call upon.

When Signor Caruso first came to America (it was his initial week, I believe), a cold prevented him from singing in "*La Bohème*." At a moment's notice the Impresario was called upon to fill this vacancy, inasmuch as it was not expedient to change the opera. Fortunately, a singer was in New York on his way to South America, and happened to be free for the evening; he was immediately secured. This dénouement caused Mr. Conried thereafter to make sure that several singers in his company were equipped with a thorough understanding of the same rôle. Such a policy saved him much future uneasiness, but did not relieve him from

the necessity of looking after the health of those who were precious to his success.

One note runs:

MOST ESTEEMED DIRECTOR:

Receive, I beg you, my best and heartiest thanks for your great kindness. The greeting of flowers pleased me very much. Your advice as to the treatment of my cold has been followed with good results, and to-day, I am, thanks to you, so far recovered that I can already sing exercises. To be sure, I haven't obeyed my own doctor, as you can guess, but I have given him advice instead,—that should he ever have a patient with whom he doesn't know what to do, he should apply to you for advice.

Accept my heartiest thanks for the flowers and for the cure.

Yours respectfully,

MILKA TERNINA.

During Mr. Conried's régime, he was strongly criticized for his inability to contract with old-time favorites. There was much talk in the public Press about the possible reappearance of Jean de Reszke, but that tenor was wise in his persistent retirement. Conried was accused

of indifference to him, yet the real difficulty was with Jean de Reszke himself. He refused financial offers of the most flattering kind from Mr. Conried. I find a telegram addressed to Astruc in Paris, which runs as follows:

My offer for Jean was ten performances in six weeks, three thousand dollars each performance, with right to renew for ten more performances at the same terms. This is absolutely the highest salary possible. Would have to know at once. If I had known before, would not have engaged Rousselière and Soubeyran. Expect answer about Colonne.

Nothing resulted from these negotiations. Mr. Conried was a constant visitor at M. de Reszke's singing-school in Paris, and often instructed his artists to go to him in the preparation for a rôle. We find him writing to Mme. Rappold, from Bad Gastein, on July 31, 1906:

I was delighted to hear you had sung for Mme. Wagner and Siegfried, and it would be very nice to get the *invitation* to sing at Bayreuth, but if you do, do not promise anything; simply say you will be delighted to do so, *if you can*, but by all means you must get this in-

vation in writing. If you want to stay a week longer, do so, but I think you should not remain any longer than that. Your work with Fuchs, in Munich, is of very great importance, and you must go to Jean in September. Take the parts of *Freya* and *Fricka*. Please find out if Mr. Humperdinck (composer of "Hänsel und Gretel") is in Bayreuth; if so, telegraph me. . . . You can tell him I have some money for him. . . .

With best regards from us all,

Yours very truly,

CONRIED.

It is thus that a "star," engaged to sing in opera, finds her time all mapped out for her by the Impresario, even before the season begins. All the while the Director is travelling through Europe, he is formulating his plans, and, like a veritable dictator, is sending forth mandates to his singers. These instructions are not mere requests; they are absolute orders. Early in July the instructions are forwarded, thick and fast. For example:

MY DEAR MONSIEUR PLANÇON:

I have received your letter of June 18, and I appreciate the reason you offer me regarding

Mephisto in "La Damnation de Faust." Only you are not so fat (*gros*) as you believe, and as you have already studied the rôle, I pray you to make ready to sing it. I am sure of your success in this rôle.

As for "Lakmé," I understand that is absolutely impossible for you.

Now, my dear Monsieur Plançon, here are the new operas that I wish to give in French and Italian during the next season:

"L'Africaine" (Italian), "Mme. Butterfly" (Italian); "Damnation de Faust" (French), "Fra Diavola" (Italian); "Puritani" (Italian), "Fédora" (Italian), "Manon Lescaut" (Italian), "Adrienne Lecouvreur" (Italian).

I count upon you for *Don Pedro* or *L'Inquisiteur* in "L'Africaine" (Italian), *Mephisto* in "Damnation" (French), if that is possible, *Giacomo* in "Fra Diavolo" (Italian), *Sir Giorgio* in "Puritani" (Italian).

I am told that you already have sung in these rôles. If there are any that you do not know yet, I wish you would study them. Write me at Bad Gastein, Hotel Kaiserhof, if I may count upon you for these rôles.

Very much the same type of letter was sent to M. Journet, only with the further instruc-

tions that new costumes must be procured for his parts in "Figaro" and "Gioconda."

I find an interesting note to Caruso, in illustration of the cordial relationship existing between singer and Impresario:

MY DEAR CARUSO:

Do not trouble yourself about your passage to New York. I will be very glad if you come as you like to come, on whatever steamer or line you want. I know you too well not to be sure that you will not spend more money than is absolutely necessary, and, in making the arrangements, you will do all you can to get terms as cheap as possible. I will return to you the money you pay for the passage when you arrive in New York.

About your costumes, I say the same. If you want to order them at Landolf, do so. The costumes needed for this season will be "Faust," "Carmen," *Lionel*, "Favorita," "Somnambula," "Manon" (Puccini).

My telegram to you told you that I am thankful for your congratulations, but I do not know why or wherefore you congratulate me. What have I done? *

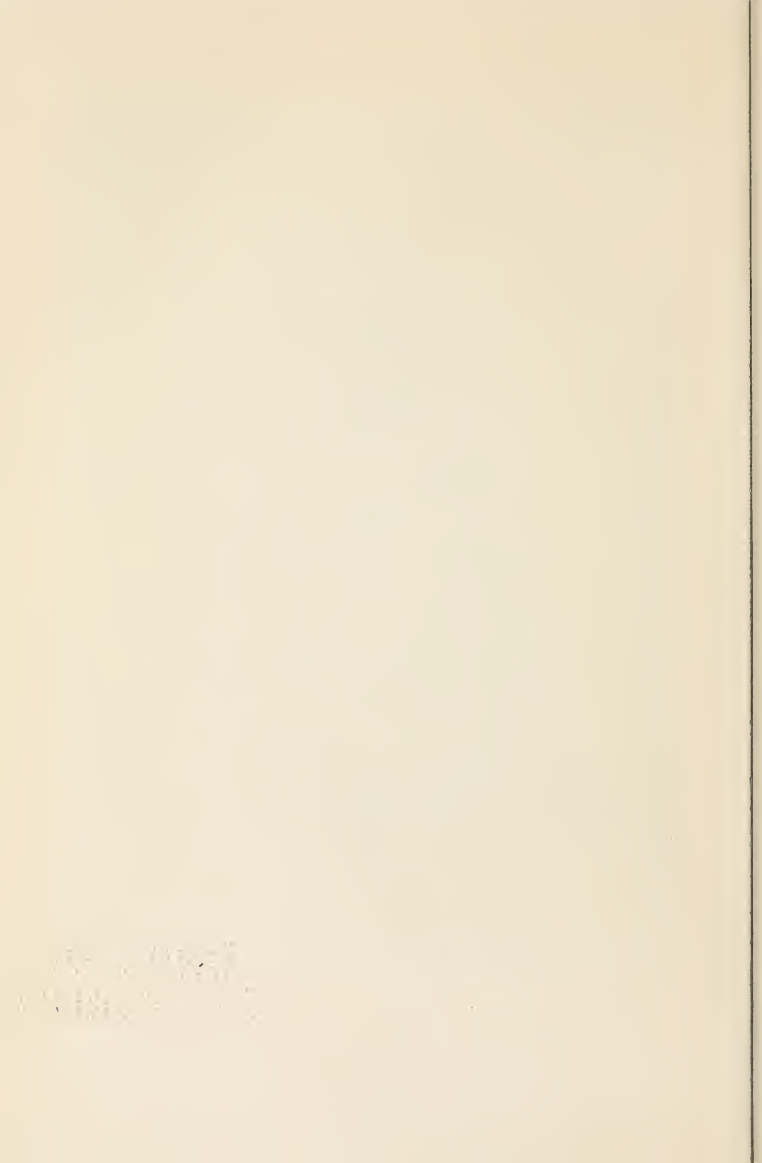
HEINRICH CONRIED.

* Caruso referred to one of the many Orders bestowed on Mr. Conried by foreign governments. See Chapter X.



*Al Signor Enrico Caruso
Enrico Caruso dedica con affetto e
ammirazione. New York 1904*

ENRICO CARUSO



As the time draws near for the Impresario to return to America after his long and arduous search for new singers and new parts, and after he has re-engaged the favorites of the previous season, his letters take on a very peremptory tone. For he now begins rounding up the details before his sailing. Contracts are to be signed and witnessed at the last moment, transportation terms have to be agreed upon, the repertories have to be assigned, and all of these details have to be consummated with definiteness and with a polite insistence that will end in nothing but success.

"My work has not diminished," writes Mr. Conried, "and the only hope for rest is the ocean trip—with my seasickness!"

Notice the absolute command Mr. Conried had of the detailed arrangements, not only for his Metropolitan Opera House, but for his Irving Place Theatre, during the season of 1906-7. He, for example, is making his contract with Mme. Fremstad for the coming year, guaranteeing her forty performances, with the privilege of appearing in private or public concerts ten times out of the forty, it being thoroughly understood that there will be no appearances two nights in succession. We find in the very extensive repertoire for which she was cast, that

in case Strauss's "Salome" was not given, she was to appear as *Isolde* in "Tristan und Isolde"; her passage to and from Europe was guaranteed, and many of her costumes were to be supplied free of charge. At the same time, we find Mr. Conried writing to his representative, Mr. Castel-Bert, regarding a ship-stage for the Irving Place Theatre, wherein a scene might be built, representing the interior of a smoking-room aboard a liner, it being Mr. Conried's idea to represent how seasick the people in a certain play could get.

The Impresario, however autocratic he may be, must be careful to show regard for the feelings of his singers. If he wishes them to oblige him, he is compelled to approach them with gloved hands, although there are many letters before me written with the hand of mail. Bringing an artist of large name to terms is no easy matter. Tact, rather than sincerity, is characteristic of the following letter, dated August 18, 1906:

MY DEAR MR. PLANÇON:

Do not think that I, because you were nice and kind in granting my former requests in regard to new parts, take advantage. I think the part now in question is one you have sung

before. It is the rôle of *Milakantha* in "Lak-mé," which I want to give with Mme. Sembrich. You will greatly oblige me if you will let me know your decision.

Thanking you beforehand, I am,

Yours sincerely,

HEINRICH CONRIED.

A request of similar spirit was sent to M. Scotti, showing the difficulties arising from language:

I know that it is not very pleasant for you to study in French, but I have to produce so many things new this season, that I am compelled to task my artists a little heavier than usual.

Often, an artist who has created a favorable impression on the Impresario, is impossible to secure. "I am trying to engage Mr. Jehin," writes Mr. Conried, "and have been trying for several months to do so, but have not succeeded so far. He is engaged at Monte Carlo, and the question is if he can get released. You are quite right. He is very fine, but the trouble is, all are engaged and not to be had."

During that same season abroad,—the summer of 1906,—Mr. Conried was making several

plans for his artists,—plans that were never consummated. For example, from Vienna, on June 10, 1906, he writes:

MY DEAR MME. EAMES:

As much as I would have liked to meet you soon, I cannot arrange it at present, and must see if I will be able to call on you later. I really do not know what new opera to submit to you. "Cavalleria" is too expensive to be given with *you*. What I am looking for is an opera which fills the entire evening. I have decided to give "Butterfly," "Damnation," "Manon" (Puccini), very likely "Adrienne Lecouvreur." Would you sing *Selika* in "Africaine," which will be a very big production?

I hope to be able to suggest something very soon.

I wish you would go to Dresden to hear Strauss's "Salome"; simply grand!

Yours as ever,

CONRIED.

In this vein, likewise, he writes to Miss Farrar:

Thanks for your letter. I am awfully sorry that you cannot arrange to come here. I will try my utmost to see you on the 6th, at Salz-

burg; if not, I will communicate with you by letter.

In case I should come to terms with Richard Strauss—he asks at present ridiculously high terms—I would be very much pleased to have you create *Salome*, which will very likely be done about the middle of February.

Very sincerely,

H. C.

How about Butterfly?

And a few days later he writes:

Will you please let me know how long you will stay in Salzburg, from the 6th of August? And will you kindly state if you are willing to sing “Butterfly?” It seems I cannot come to terms with Strauss about “Salome.” He wants the earth and a small piece besides.

Very truly yours,

CONRIED.

The friendliest relations always existed between Miss Farrar and Mr. Conried. After the Impresario’s resignation, when he went abroad, she was one among the many to write him cordially.

DEAR MR. CONRIED:

I should have written before, but have had

so much to do. Where are you? And I hope the summer brings you health and strength. Shall you come to Berlin this fall? I shall be here till the 27th of October. As you have doubtless read, I have re-signed, and all seems smooth till the five years are up. Please give our kind regards and best wishes to your family. Has Mrs. Conried still the taste for naughty French literature? I can give her some good books! I have been riding horseback to reduce. And also have made several auto trips in the Harz.

Ask some of the people who surround you, and who have nothing to do but play pinochle, to let me hear from you! Always here at Berlin.

I have two parrots, and a pig that plays *Car-men* when you turn its tail! Very amusing!

With Herzlichen Grüßen, thine,

GERALDINE FARRAR.*

Your doctor will not find this letter a strain on your nerves!

* See Henry T. Finck's "Success in Music and How it is Won" (Scribner, 1909): A chapter, page 174, on Miss Farrar, in which he quotes some very delightful correspondence between himself and the noted singer. This correspondence throws a most interesting light on the intellectual approach of Miss Farrar toward her work. It is to be noted also that Miss Farrar, in the December, 1915, number of the *Ladies Home Journal*, began the publication of her reminiscences. These have been issued in book form, 1916, by Houghton Mifflin Co.

The Impresario possesses the artistic temperament, as well as his singers, and if he thinks himself imposed upon, he will not brook any authority from others. This telegram to Mme. Eames is illustrative of the care with which Mr. Conried protected his position:

Many thanks, but the tenor of your letters dictates to me to cast *Selika* differently. I never want to be accused again of ingratitude. Nevertheless I will always remain,

Your faithful

CONRIED.

He was careful in his treatment of Mme. Eames, however, even though every now and again he would send her scolding letters and telegrams, at first entreating and then ordering her to do this or that; telling her in one outburst of the irritation he felt that she was the only one among his "stars" persistently to oppose his wishes. The following is a typical communication [July 17, 1906]:

MY DEAR MME. EAMES:

I am to-day in a position to answer your letter of June 28th, and to ask you to be kind enough to consent to sing *Selika*, in "Africaine," in Italian, as the artists in the cast, Caruso and

so forth, tell me it would be an impossibility for them to study their parts in French, and you can readily understand what a difference it would make for the opera if Caruso could sing it in Italian.

For you, it is the easiest matter in the world, and it will make no difference to you and to your singing; with Caruso, however, it is different, and I would not like to cast the opera without him.

I have ordered most beautiful costumes and scenery for the production, which I consider will be the production of the season. If you want me to, I will gladly send you the costume-plates which Professor Loeffler, the famous professor of the Royal Academy in Vienna, has designed for *Selika*.

"Damnation" I will not give in Italian at all. I never dreamed of it; if you have read in my letters that I intended to do so, it was simply a stupidity or, to put it mildly, a slip of the pen. I am sorry to say that up to now I have not had a day's rest, working harder than ever, and I hope you will lighten my burden by writing me a few nice lines, telling me that you are ready to help me along, wherever you can.

The Impresario should never place himself

in the position of appearing to need the services of a singer badly. When he states his terms, he should abide by them. In 1905, while Mr. Conried was negotiating for Dalmorès, he wrote to Hillier, that singer's representative:

Your answer to my proposition surprised me. After granting 20,000 francs, you come with new propositions. Now, to be very short: I want to give Mr. Dalmorès a chance. I am willing to risk that very *big* salary, but I am not willing to do more than I said in my last letter. If Mr. Dalmorès feels that he can afford to throw away the opportunity of his lifetime so easily, well and good. I have had offers from different tenors, and enclosed you will find a telegram requesting me to send a contract for Rousselière; besides, D'Aubigné, etc. . . . are waiting for my decision.

The Impresario, after engaging a singer, has to take great care that the first impression of that singer on the public is favorable, and the consequence is, he is most eager to select a satisfactory rôle for the début. To his agent, Mr. Conried writes, on June 10, 1906:

I expect the photographs of Cavalieri.
. . . I would like to know what she wishes

to make her début in. I want her to sing a part which has not been sung before. How would *Manon* or *Adrienne* or *Fedora* do?

But, even though an Impresario may feel around for the proper casting of his operas, he is very careful not to make rash promises to his singers. It often happens that his stars will guard jealously certain rôles as belonging distinctively to them. When Hammerstein engaged Cavalieri for the Manhattan Opera House, he promised her, in an unguarded moment of enthusiasm, that she should appear in "Thaïs," a rôle that had gained her a reputation in Paris. But, when Miss Mary Garden heard of this promise—which had also been made to her—she sent an emphatic cable to Hammerstein, declaring that either he would change his mind or accept her resignation! Opera lovers remember the bringing to mark of this Impresario. He wrote an apologetic letter to Miss Garden, declaring that he would most assuredly abide by his promise to her. So Cavalieri was stricken from the cast. What was the result of this *faux pas* on the part of Hammerstein? It became a delicate situation. Factions immediately developed among the Manhattan Opera House singers. The Italians

were at war with the French because the Impresario had decided for the Garden rather for the Cavalieri! Truly, the Impresario is often between the devil and the deep sea!

We recollect the bitterness created in Paris when Debussy selected Miss Mary Garden, instead of Mme. Maeterlinck, for the rôle of *Mélisande*, in Maurice Maeterlinck's mystical drama; and it is a matter of literary history—the estrangement that arose between author and composer because of that fact.* It was after this incident that Maeterlinck established the invariable rule that his wife should be allowed an option on all opera rôles based on his dramas. Since that time, Mme. Maeterlinck has been heard at the Boston Opera House as *Mélisande*. But nevertheless, Miss Garden has guarded the rôle jealously; for, though Maggie Teyte has gained a reputation in Paris as the mystical little Princess, she was prevented from appearing in her original part when she joined the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, because of Miss Garden's supremacy and self-appointed possession.

There never has been such competition in Grand Opera in America as during the time

* See the Mary Garden Edition of Maeterlinck's "Pelléas and Mélisande" (Thomas Y. Crowell Company), with an introduction by Montrose J. Moses.

succeeding the resignation of Heinrich Conried—first under the control of Dippel and Gatti-Casazza, and finally under the supreme control of the latter. Hammerstein had so succeeded in stirring things up that rivalry was strenuous.

There is no telling what would have been the future history of the Metropolitan had it not been possible for the Directors to buy out the Manhattan Opera Company, and, through the transaction, to debar Hammerstein from again being an Impresario in New York. Like Conried, Mr. Hammerstein guarded his contracts zealously. During his three years of office as Impresario, his time was largely spent in issuing injunctions against particular singers. Albani, Constantineau, Marguerite Silvia—all had to resort to subterfuge in order to escape the constable, sent to uphold the rights of Mr. Hammerstein, when they wished to sing elsewhere. On the other hand, there were singers who tried to break their agreements with the Metropolitan in order to make better contracts with the rival house. It is told that Dalmorès, during a suit brought against him for \$25,000 by the Metropolitan Opera Company, escaped aboard a ship in the uniform of a cornet player! It is a matter of record that Conried

might have had Renaud, if he had been a judge of singers, and had taken advantage of a contract which was on his desk. But he was made to realize by agents abroad that, as an artist, Renaud was not always dependable, and it was the dependable singer Mr. Conried was looking for.

Sometimes an Impresario is himself obliged to come to terms; sometimes he takes a stand based solely on his own observation, rather than on any technical knowledge he may possess; and sometimes his eagerness to secure a particular result is based on his own personal ambition. It was Mr. Conried's ability to get those he most needed, that did most to add lustre to his reputation as an Impresario. Here, for instance, is a characteristic note:

MY DEAR MR. ASTRUC:

As there is no possibility of Chaliapine accepting my terms, I will engage him at the terms stated by you; that is, twenty-six performances in three months.

Now, to the conductor. You make a big mistake in offering me a conductor like M. Catherine at terms which the very first conductor receives at my Opera House. In fact, he has much less. Catherine, I know, is a

very good corepetitor, but not the orchestra director I want. He must be an authority. I believe that M. Catherine earns as corepetitor, by giving lessons and accompanying, more money than an ordinary orchestra leader would earn. That does not come into question with me. I don't need a corepetitor. I need an excellent musical director who has had lots of experience at leading opera houses.

Find out under what conditions you could get Colonne, for about three or four months, commencing November. He could conduct "Damnation," "Faust," "Romeo," "Carmen," "Afri-caine." Bear in mind that the conditions could not be such ridiculously high ones as you probably would propose. I note that he received for a single concert in New York a very large amount; but it is a different thing engaging him for three or four months.

You know that Mottl, the great conductor, has been engaged by me. And I am sure that Colonne should not charge as much as Mottl, who surely has an immense income in Germany. I am willing to pay M. Colonne as high a salary as any leading conductor in the world could justly demand, but this must be in reason. You must take into consideration that the salary paid to M. Colonne will only in-

crease my expenses, and not my income. All seats for next season, as you know, are sold by subscription, and I cannot do more than sell out. It is only my artistic ambition that lets me make the suggestion to you to find out if we could come to some arrangement with Colonne. You suggested him for "Damnation." I don't want him for one work only. I want him as a conductor, and am perfectly willing, if he is reasonable, to engage him not only for this but for three or four more seasons.

We speak in general terms of the cost of opera, and even then the figures seem stupendous to us. The season of 1906-07, which we have found Mr. Conried planning in the letters just quoted, was one of his most prosperous, as far as door receipts are concerned. These amounted to \$1,312,068. But, in spite of the fact that this was an increase of about \$205,000 over 1903-04, \$27,000 over 1904-05, and \$103,000 over 1905-06 [the San Francisco earthquake year], the season closed with a loss of \$84,039 because he paid back what had been destroyed during the western trip. The salaries were heavier than ever, the amount paid out being \$689,014; the orchestra cost more than ever before—to the extent of \$113,668; as did likewise the steam-

ship (\$30,601) and railroad (\$35,787) transportation. In addition to all this, the Impresario for the year received his regular salary of \$20,000. The total expenditures therefore, were \$1,471,822 and the total receipts from various sources of revenue amounted to \$1,387,783. But, while 1906-07 showed a loss on the ledgers, the previous seasons had netted Mr. Conried profits, to the following amounts:— 1903-04, \$60,000; 1904-05, \$126,326; 1905-06, \$111,018.

Contracts with singers vary as the years go by—they vary according to the rapidity with which a singer slips into favor. As we have said, Mr. Caruso received \$2,000 a night. In general, the details of his contract for 1905-06 read as follows:

Forty performances at 7,000 francs per performance. The artist is allowed to miss four times, without effecting his guarantee. Eight performances per month or two performances per week guaranteed. Never to sing twice in succession. For outside engagements, 7,000 francs.

Mme. Nordica's terms were as follows:

Twenty performances guaranteed at \$1,250,

during seventeen weeks. To sing not less than once nor more than three times per week. If the artist sings three times in one week, the repertoire must be mutually agreed upon.

Mme. Sembrich's contract called for more details:

One thousand dollars per performance. Forty-five guaranteed, during twenty-two weeks (November 20 to April 21). To sing twice per week, and during one week three times. If no performances are given during Holy Week, the artist agrees to sing three times per week in three different weeks, so that the guaranteed number of forty-five performances will be reached in twenty-two weeks. Otherwise, each performance over and above two per week shall be regarded as an extra performance, and not included in the guaranteed forty-five performances.

The guaranteed forty-five shall not include more than four Sunday concerts or five Saturday evening performances. If artist is compelled, in one of the weeks during which she is to sing three times, to miss one of the three performances through illness, the performance thus missed shall not be deducted from the number of guaranteed, but she agrees to replace

said missed performance on some other occasion at the pleasure of the company. The artist reserves the right to sing for her own account at six outside engagements, provided she notifies the management at least one month in advance. Two orchestra seats for each performance in which she sings.

Mme. Eames was guaranteed nine performances at \$1,500 each, and ten performances in the supplementary season at the same price. In the case of Van Rooy, we find this restriction on his part:

The artist is not required to sing the following rôles in succession:

The Flying Dutchman, *Wotan* in "Siegfried," *Hans Sachs*, and *Telramond*.

Signor Caruso has always proven a gold-mine to the Impresario, whether Mr. Conried or Mr. Gatti-Casazza. It is only another indication of the far-seeing business acumen of Director Conried that soon after the acclaim of the great Italian tenor, the Impresario hastened to secure absolute managerial control of this singer, both in concert and opera, *for the entire world*. Had Mr. Conried lived, it is more than probable that his successor, as manager of Grand Opera

at the Metropolitan, would have had to come to him in order to secure the services of Caruso. For the latter was, and is, more than a mere paying proposition. His drawing powers are exhaustless, and his name has only to be placed on the boards to result in an enormous increase in receipts. It is well to note that in the cut-rate speculating offices, where opera tickets sometimes find their way, the advertisements state that tickets for operas in which Signor Caruso appears will be sold at *full* prices!

During 1908, Caruso was taken on a concert tour, visiting seven cities, and giving as many concerts. The net result of the receipts were \$42,656, Cleveland paying \$8,319 for the privilege of being on the list. Expenses, of course, have to be taken into consideration, and these amounted to a little over \$8,300. When it is realized that the most successful theatrical production is "doing good business" when the receipts for the week are \$13,000, it is clear that Caruso's position in the public regard was then, as it is now, of exceptional strength. It may safely be calculated that each concert on this tour netted a profit of over \$4,500.

There is another financial consideration in the mad career of the Impresario. Irrespective of his personal expenditure while in Europe—

in itself a large item, and the bulk of which is shouldered by the company he represents—he has to give advances in salary to most of his singers; and he likewise has to pay heavily in advance for music scores and for costumes. Scenery and designs have to be bought; advance royalties have to be arranged and met, and agents must receive their commissions. In this way, during the season from May 6th to September 6th, of the year 1907, Mr. Conried paid out in actual money the sum of \$41,397.

Since Conried's day, conditions at the Metropolitan Opera House have changed only in a few respects. With him, it was customary to receive a salary as Director, but, as we have seen, he was a heavy stockholder in the opera organization which bore his name, and this alone brought him a substantial income. To-day the Director has *no* financial interests in the company whatever. Since the Conried régime, there have been *no* benefit performances. But, in his day, coming from the German Theatre, where the custom was proverbial for an actor or manager to calculate in his year's income the proceeds of a complimentary performance, he gave himself each season a testimonial, in which a galaxy of "stars" contributed their talents. The last one given to

him was when, broken in health, he was nearing the end of his struggle. The evening netted him \$18,819.

Before Conried and Grau became Impresarios, it was thought that only by loss could real opera ever be given the public. But these shrewd business managers proved the case to be otherwise.

As I write, I have before me two tables covering the repertoires of two seasons, and showing the profits of each performance. The figures in a way measure the popularity of the different operas. But this popularity is also dependent on the make-up of the casts, showing that the singers had varying drawing powers. We are able to assert the popularity of "Aida," which never drew houses amounting to less than \$10,500 a performance. "Bohème," "Gioconda," "Traviata," and "Trovatore" closely followed. By such a table, one can calculate on the value of audiences on Monday and Friday evenings, and on Saturday matinées. One can also, in view of the high salaries and expense of opera, begin to realize how impossible it is to give the best opera in the best manner at popular prices. On Saturday evening—the popular priced night at the Metropolitan—"Aida," at \$6,072, drew the

largest audience in thirty-two weeks of Saturdays. The influence of a powerful name on the Sunday evening concert receipts is seen whenever Sembrich or Nordica was advertised as soloist; of equal value were Ysaye, Hoffman, and Gerardy.

Such, in part, is what an Impresario has to go through, in order to fill his obligations as head of the Metropolitan Opera House. Undoubtedly it is the pace that kills! He is surrounded by fiery temperaments, hearing a babel of foreign tongues, appeasing the countless superstitions of the singers, who go to pieces on the slightest provocation. Times change, and with them public favorites give way to others. The present "stars" at the Metropolitan Opera House have much to be thankful for that Lilli Lehmann, once such a brilliant figure in German opera, can now impart practical instruction to others in regard to the human voice. She has written several books on her art. There are opera-goers who remember when she shone supreme in New York. Jean de Reszke, whose golden tones will vie in memory with those of Caruso, also rounds out his life in service to other singers. Mme. Nordica, just before her death, was anxious to erect, somewhere on the Hudson, a conservatory for the perpetuation

of her methods. And so will it be with those who now delight music lovers. Already we hear Mary Garden giving advice to younger singers than herself; already we hear words of wisdom regarding opera from Geraldine Farrar,* who makes a plea for recognition of the young singer in process of development. Mme. Farrar rightly claims that the American music public has interest only in the supreme artist; that it finds no interest in watching a voice develop and grow richer from year to year. It is this demand on the part of the American public for opera at its fullest point of development that makes the Impresario's work all the more difficult. He is given the job of looking for perfection. He must secure the new "stars" abroad, just at the time of their perfect flowering. And he must get them at all costs! Hammerstein snapped his fingers at such a policy. So did the Boston Opera Company. But where are they to-day? They were willing to take the voice in the making.

No wonder the Impresario must always be on guard, night and day. When he leaves for Europe, reporters besiege him to know what his intentions are; when he returns to New

* Miss Farrar was married, on February 8, 1916, to Mr. Lou-Tellegen, a Dutch actor, who was first seen in America as leading support for Mme. Bernhardt.

York, he issues a manifesto like a conquering general. Outwardly, the public sees him a man, happy to have his "stars" around him. Inwardly, his health is at stake, and he is tired before he begins the actual work of getting his house in order for the new season.

CHAPTER VI

CRITICISMS AGAINST CONRIED. "Rigoletto." "Parsifal": Discussion for and against; Conried's statement. The Case: Conried *versus* the Wagner family. "Parsifal" performed.

CONRIED entered into his Directorship of the Metropolitan Opera House in a blaze of glory, everyone on all sides expecting of him great innovations, and interested in his change of policy. Yet, when the first season was closed, there was a decided expression of disappointment that, because of the drawing power of Signor Caruso, the French element in the repertory, which had so distinctively marked the Grau régime, had been materially decreased; while German opera, likewise, had given way because of Caruso's inability to sing in that language. There is no doubt that much of Mr. Conried's prestige during that first season was heightened by the assistance of Herr Felix Mottl, who later on, through clash of ideas, withdrew from the Metropolitan.

The musical critic of *The Nation* (N. Y.),

in reviewing Herr Conried's first season, called attention to the difficulties he had in satisfying the demands of Philadelphia, that city wanting opera once a week, instead of the customary three weeks at the end of the opera season in New York. In explanation, Mr. Conried gave as his reason for opposing the idea, that he needed the one night a week for rehearsal. But we have already seen how unfair general criticism was to Mr. Conried in the instance when the papers declared that he had not used sufficient persuasive power to bring over, at any price, such a singer as Jean de Reszke. It was pointed out with considerable praise to Conried that his revival of Donizetti's "Elisir d'Amore" and "Lucia di Lammermoor" indicated a possible renaissance of old-fashioned Italian opera.

As a measure of critical displeasure against Mr. Conried, for his inability to draw around him an adequate number of stars, Mr. Finck declared that, during this first season, Fritz Scheff was heading her own company; Calvé and Schumann-Heink were about to follow her example; while Nordica, Melba, Gadske, and Campanini were appearing in concert. It would seem, therefore, that, however much the public might take Signor Caruso into its favor,

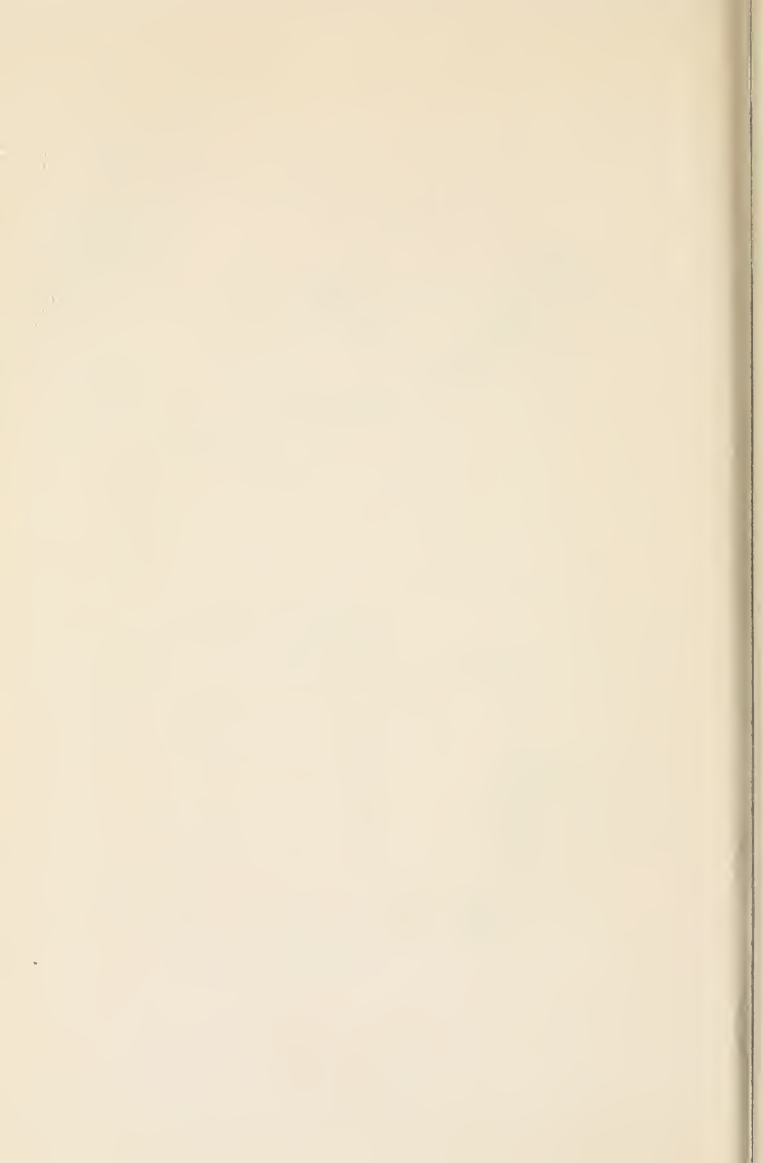
CARUSO
ON
CONRIED'S
FASHION



CARUSO'S
FASHION



A CARUSO CARTOON



Conried's enthusiastic dependence on that great tenor brought down upon his head much of the displeasure which was shown during this initial period of his régime.

He opened his season on the evening of November 23, 1903, with "Rigoletto," in order to introduce Caruso. While that singer gave a vigorous and beautiful performance, he showed a certain amount of nervousness which was very apparent to everybody present. One would be surprised if he had exhibited, on this his début, that same authority and spirit which later characterized his work. Some claim that the audience still had Jean de Reszke in memory, and was loath to accord welcome to a newcomer. But Conried, despite the lack of enthusiastic support, despite his difficulty in making the critics show unqualified interest in the tenor, went behind stage, cheered Caruso up, and signed with him a five years' contract. Was this to be regarded as business foresight or as artistic judgment?

While the appearance of Caruso, and the increase of his popularity, did much to win for Mr. Conried a certain amount of notoriety as an Impresario, the importance of this artistic acquisition was entirely overclouded by the general discussion and the heated arguments which

followed Mr. Conried's announcement that, during his season, he had definitely arranged to break through the traditions of Bayreuth, and to present, for the first time before an American public, the Wagner opera of "Parsifal." Such intention on his part brought down upon him the anathema of all conservative music-lovers, and Conried found himself being discussed on all hands, from the pulpit, in the newspapers, and in the magazines. Not only did the clergy oppose the presentation of this semi-religious drama which, through the devotion of its clientele and through the protection it received at Bayreuth, had developed around it almost the same sacred tradition which has protected the Passion Play of Oberammergau through many centuries, but committees called upon the Mayor of New York to see whether he could not intervene and keep the stage from what they considered to be such a sacrilegious performance.

The talk which was created by Conried's intention reached the Wagner family, and efforts were made to stop all preparations immediately, while agents were sent over to the Wagner family to see whether Herr Siegfried Wagner could not come to America on a lecture tour, thus trying to turn public sympathy entirely

against Mr. Conried's efforts.* It was quite the subject of the day, and, though it has been discussed in various works on opera, and in the Press of the time, it is of decided interest to obtain Mr. Conried's own personal attitude toward his legal and moral rights to present "Parsifal." This point of view has fortunately been preserved for us, not only in a definite statement as to the relations of "Parsifal" to religion, but also in the legal papers which were drawn up at the time the case of Mme. Wagner against Conried was brought into the courts, and a decision rendered in favor of Mr. Conried, on November 24, 1903, by Judge Lacombe.

Here is Mr. Conried's statement as sent out from the Metropolitan Opera House:

The hostility of Frau Cosima Wagner and her friends to the New York production of "Parsifal" has found expression in many ways. It has been denounced as irreverent, piratical,

* Consult the Reminiscences of Rudolf Aronson. See Conried cartoon in *Life*, August 31, 1905; 1904 (page 113). See James Huneker's "Parsifal, a Mystic Melodrama," in his volume, "Overtones," pages 64-108; Lawrence Gilman's "Parsifal and Its Significance," in "Modern Music," pages 153-166; W. J. Henderson's "Parsifalia," in "Modern Musical Drift," pages 1-38. Also Richard Wagner's "My Life," 2 vols. See Albert Lavignac's "Festival Theatre in Bayreuth"; Henry E. Krehbiel's "Studies in the Wagnerian Drama"; Henry T. Finck's "Wagner and His Work"; data in the files of *Musical America* and *The Musical Courier*, for September, October, November, and December of that year.

and even as blasphemous. The law has been appealed to, on the most idle pretexts, to prevent my putting Richard Wagner's last great work within the reach of American music-lovers. And efforts have been made, directly and indirectly, to stir up a crusade against the approaching production and against myself, on the ground that "Parsifal" is a "religious music-drama," and therefore to be ranked in the same category as the Passion Play, the performance of which has so far not been permitted in New York.

"Parsifal," however, will be performed here, as I have already announced, on the 24th of December; and I am confident that after hearing and seeing it at the Metropolitan Opera House, the most bigoted of Frau Wagner's American partisans (if there are any) will agree with me that, in producing the work, I am paying the highest and most fitting tribute to the memory of the master who created it.

To the moral objections to the American stage production of "Parsifal," I have already replied in various statements which have been published. Jealousy may have had a remote connection with the indignation of my respected colleagues, the operatic managers of Germany. They knew that they would have to wait ten years before

they could legally produce "Parsifal" [the opera, under the legal status, was to be considered free in February, 1913], and, not perhaps unnaturally, they resented the idea of seeing an American get ahead of them. Be this as it may, my legal and moral position in regard to "Parsifal" is absolutely secure.

The attitude of the Wagner heirs, in the "Parsifal" controversy, I must say, surprises me. They had not protested on any of the several occasions on which "Parsifal" had been interpreted here in concert form; and, as I conceived, I was justified in taking it for granted that they would also not protest against a production which promised to be worthy of the great composer and his work, musically, scenically and, indeed, in every way. As to the proprietary issue: it was well-known to the Wagner heirs that none of the Wagner music-dramas had been legally protected in America. I had once conferred on the subject with Dr. Gross, the legal representative of the Wagner heirs. Under the mistaken impression that the works of Wagner could be effectually protected in this country, as a partner in the firm of Goldmark & Conried, and as Wagner's representative, I had myself closed a contract with Mr. Edmund C. Stanton, then Director of the

Metropolitan Opera House, which bound him to pay royalties on every performance of "the Nibelung" music-dramas. When, a short time after, I went to London, to my amazement I found the scores of all Wagner's works, including the "Ring des Nibelungen," openly on sale.

This proved to me that there was no possibility of protecting them in the United States. Immediately after my return to New York, I called on Mr. Stanton, explained the situation to him, and gave him back his signed contract, explaining that I could not undertake to protect Wagner's works here, and was therefore unable to insist on the collection of royalties. My then partner, Dr. Leo Goldmark, subsequently had various negotiations with Mr. Stanton, the result of which was the signing of a new contract, in which Mr. Stanton voluntarily pledged himself to pay Wagner's heirs a certain sum (much smaller than that originally stipulated) for each performance of the "Nibelung" dramas and "Tristan und Isolde." It was specifically stated in this contract that those works could not be protected legally. With all these facts Frau Cosima Wagner and Dr. Gross were fully acquainted; and, on my visiting Bayreuth (to attend a performance of

"Parsifal"), I was overwhelmed with attentions, Frau Wagner herself using her authority to obtain seats for me and my friends, who, but for her intervention, might have been unable to secure any. That was in the early days of "Parsifal."

Goldmark and Conried are the only persons in the United States through whom Frau Wagner has received American royalties on the works she owns. I have explained that, for the "Parsifal" production, I also am willing, voluntarily, to pay royalties. My offer has been rejected, though the Wagners are well aware that anybody who so chooses can produce "Parsifal" in this country without having to apply in Bayreuth for permission to do so.

Nobody but myself has chosen to make the venture. Why? Because nobody has dared to grapple with the enormous difficulties that must be overcome in order to assure the success of a production. It was only reasonable to suppose that the prospect of "Parsifal" being produced in America, by those who are admittedly best qualified for the purpose, would have been hailed with something akin to pleasure, even in Bayreuth. Notwithstanding all the invective in which the Wagner heirs have indulged on finding that their monopoly is to

be taken from them in America sooner than in Europe, I am convinced that when, in due course, they learn how deep an impression the work has made here, they will moderate their hostility. Not, in any case, until it has been demonstrated that the New York production of the work has been a failure, can I concede to anyone the right to censure me.

As to the religious or non-religious character of "Parsifal," I ask permission to express my views through your columns. All Americans are not familiar with the master's work. And, were I to remain silent, possibly some would be deterred by respectable scruples from attending the performances at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Contrary to the suggestion so disingenuously published by my adversaries, "Parsifal" is not a "religious" drama. Efforts have been made in many directions of late to convey the misleading impression that the hero, *Parsifal*, is himself only a veiled figure of Christ. The *Holy Grail* has been misrepresented as the Host. And *Kundry* has been, quite gratuitously, spoken of as a disguised *Mary Magdalene*.

I wish to assert most emphatically that Wagner has introduced no Biblical characters and

no sacred incidents—more particularly, neither the Baptism of Christ nor the Last Supper—in “Parsifal.” Nor did the master call that work a “sacred” or “religious” play. He described it as a “*Bühnenweihfestspiel*.” It is not easy to find an accurate equivalent in English for this complex word. The root “*weih*” in connection with “*Bühne*” indicates that, through this drama, the stage is to be “dedicated”; but in an artistic, not a religious, way. A striking analogy may be seen in Beethoven’s Overture, “*Zur Weihe des Hauses*.” The German word “*Weihe*” suggests an exaltation of spirit, with a much wider significance than is conveyed by the English “holy,” or “sacred.” In certain compound words (as, for instance, in “*Kirchweih*”), “*weih*,” or “*weihe*” even, concerns profane things, such as drinking and dancing. But, by no straining, can the addition of “*weih*” to “*Bühnenfestspiel*” (anglicized “Festival Play”) justify one in assuming that Wagner intended his music-drama to be accepted as “religious.” The nearest approach to a correct (albeit clumsy) translation of “*Bühnenweihfestspiel*” might be “dedicational festival play.”

If those who have attacked me for my pretended “impiety” could find time to glance through Wagner’s writings, they might find

that the master had himself been reproached as I have been. Repelling these attacks, . . . he writes [see Volume 10 of his "Works," page 297]:

"If our Church Festivals of to-day are loved and remain attractive, thanks to the so-called 'Church Feasts' (named after them), I do not see how I could dare to produce the mystically significant Love Feast of my Knights of the Grail before the public of to-day, unless I believed that the Festival-Theatre was, in this instance, specially dedicated to the representation of so sublime a proceeding. Though I had been officially assured by certain converted Jews that offense would thereby be given to impatient Catholics, I had no need to make my position clear to any of those persons who this summer assembled at the production of my work."

Wagner, therefore, speaks quite frankly of the opera public, and moreover of a "Festival-Theatre," that is to say, of a playhouse which, in a sense, he was "dedicating" through his Festival Play. Why should it be thought wrong in me if, in the same sense, I now wish to dedicate the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House through the same music-drama? Naturally, this dedication must come first and foremost from the stage—that is to say, it can

and must be attained through the production of the work. As to that production, I can give the assurance that I shall omit nothing to bring the externals of the performance in harmony with the earnest, solemn action of the drama.

In no case can it be admitted that "Parsifal" is anything more than a—doubtless most earnest—play, dealing with earthly and human occurrences, surely intended only for the stage, for the boards, and in no way destined to a religious and devotional temple.

"Parsifal" was not composed to present the Lord's Supper, and the Washing of Feet, though it introduces rites which remind one of those symbolical and Christian solemnities, when and because they seem desirable for the dramatic development of the work.

The fundamental idea of "Parsifal" is not the glorification of any particular religion, but the proclamation of a higher humanity. The episodes in "Parsifal" remind the spectators, not only of the ideal of Christianity, but also of the ideals of Buddhism and Freemasonry.

As I believe, in "Parsifal," Wagner surely wished to do no more than every other great dramatist had aspired to achieve—to lift up Humanity, and to liberate it from the trammels of the commonplace.

"Who, with an earnest spirit and a free heart, can throughout his life regard this world, with its robbery and murder, recognized and legalized through falsehood, treachery, and deceit, without from time to time feeling compelled to turn away from it with a shudder of disgust?"

Thus Wagner.

I will now go a step farther. I maintain that Wagner, if he were still living, would, in view of the changed conditions, be only too delighted if a worthy production of his last great work were to be offered to the immense constituency of his American admirers, most of whom cannot even dream of undertaking a journey to Bayreuth, or of providing the cost for that journey.

Those who attended the first performance of "Parsifal" paid for their seats, as is customary in any theatre. This should be sufficient evidence, even in Bayreuth, that they had to do with a theatrical performance and not with a church service.

What I intend to do this year will be done in the year 1913 by the German, French, English, and Italian opera directors. Abroad it will be necessary to wait until then, because the law so orders it. And, after what has hap-

pened, I take it for granted that protests from the Wagner family will not be wanting then, and will receive just as little consideration abroad as here.

It is morally inadmissible that a handful of people, even though they should be Wagner's heirs, can decide whether a great, immortal work shall be revealed or denied to an admiring world. All humanity has an ideal right to the creations of its greatest minds.

I have reserved for myself the task of preparing, with all the powers at my disposal, a production of "Parsifal," which shall redound to the honor and glory, not only of the City of New York, but also of the whole country.

HEINRICH CONRIED.

In examining the Bill of Complaint lodged against him by the Wagner family, Mr. Conried and his lawyers, among many weak spots found in that document, emphasized certain points that bear directly on the history of "Parsifal," the main reasons for their attitude being based on the argument followed in the manifesto of Mr. Conried just quoted. For example, it was claimed by the defendants, Mr. Conried and the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, that Richard Wagner had financial

advantage in view when he expressed the desire to reserve "Parsifal" exclusively for Bayreuth, and, in evidence of this, they quoted a letter of the composer to Hans von Wolzogen,* which read:

"Among the revivals, I intend that the next shall comprise some exclusive performances of the dedicatory festival play, 'Parsifal,' and this for external as well as internal reasons. The external reasons relate to the income producing capacity of such performances, provided they can be given nowhere else and only under my supervision in Bayreuth."†

It was also brought out in the examination of the Bill of Complaint, that "Parsifal" had been performed previously, outside of Bayreuth, at the Royal Opera House in Munich.

In America, it was given for the first time, though without scenery and costumes, on the stage of the Academy of Music, at Brooklyn, March 31, 1890, the late Anton Seidl, Lilli Lehmann, Paul Kalisch, Theodore Reichmann and Emil Fischer taking part. The performance began at five o'clock in the afternoon, so the evidence runs, and there was an intermis-

* See "Works," Vol. 10, p. 287.

† Quoted by the defendants in a long document which traced the entire proceedings in the U. S. Circuit Court, Southern District of New York.

sion of one hour and a half after the first act.

No protests whatever had been made by the Wagner heirs against this production, and over more recent performances of the work, which were all in concert form, and therefore more or less inadequate. The opposition seemed to be directed merely against adequate performance.

To the statement of the complainants that, through the lifetime of Richard Wagner, and up to the day of the trial, no public performance of "Parsifal" had ever been given for review, and no authorized publication of the score had been allowed, Mr. Conried replied that, not only had he found an unusually large number of orchestra scores sold outside of Bayreuth, but he himself could have bought in London, for the price of £10, the full score, had he so chosen to do, without entering into any agreement with the Wagner family.

One of the chief arguments put forward by the Wagner family was that in no way whatsoever did they benefit pecuniarily from any of the performances of "Parsifal," as given at the Festspiel House in Bayreuth, and that they recognized the performing rights were a valuable asset, Mr. Conried having offered them \$20,000 for the same, and they having been offered even more by other people.

As one of the Vice-Presidents of the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, Mr. Henry Morgenthau, in his testimony, brought out the indisputable fact that Wagner was not insensible to the pecuniary returns from the performances in the theatre at Bayreuth, and in substantiation of this belief on his part, he quoted a letter written by Wagner to Mr. Theodore Thomas, who had suggested that Wagner compose a Centennial March for the Philadelphia Exposition. The communication is under date of December 22, 1875:

“On this occasion, too, I beg to express my thanks to Musical-Director Thomas for his kind efforts in America on behalf of myself and my enterprises over there. As regards his latest request to me, I will say that it is quite possible that, for the opening of the American national festival, something may occur to me—perhaps in a broad march-form—that I can make use of, although I have not written a note of music for a long time, and have quite got out of the way of so-called composing, which you will easily understand.

“Well, if I send you the thing, I shall expect in return that the Americans will behave well toward me, especially as regards the further-

ance of my Festival Plays, which I have postponed with special reference to them to the second half of August, at the cost of considerable trouble in regard to the singers to be engaged. I hope soon to be able to feel assured of the American visitors." *

In this roundabout fashion, therefore, the mandates of Wagner's will were overcome—mandates which declared that the great music-drama was to be given only at Bayreuth. Heretofore, this provision had been complied with by the world's impresarios, not so much from sentiment as because of the immense difficulties to be encountered in its production.

It is claimed that Mr. Conried, in one of his numerous visits to Bayreuth, had declared to Mme. Wagner that some time somebody was going to produce Wagner's festival-drama, inasmuch as it was not protected by copyright. This somebody happened to be himself!

While all these disputes were going on, active preparations for the actual performance at the Metropolitan Opera House were under way. Mr. Conried brought over Anton Fuchs, who had prepared the music-drama at Munich and Bayreuth, and he also engaged Carl Lautenschlager, who had prepared the Bayreuth stage

* Finck: "Wagner and His Works," Vol. 2, page 506.

for the stage difficulties imposed by the operatic panorama.

Not only had the stage of the Metropolitan to be entirely rebuilt,* but a complicated mechanism had to be installed.†

While the case was being prepared for the courts, Mr. Conried gathered around him all of those people necessary to the success of his undertaking. The case was heard on November 20, 1903, before Judge Lacombe, Mr. Conried's defense being ably directed by his personal friend, Judge Dittenhoefer. On November 24, 1903, a decision was rendered in favor of Conried and the Conried Metropolitan Opera House.

The first performance was given on December 24, 1903. For the production, Mr. Conried had engaged Alois Burgstaller, the great *Par-sifal* of the Bayreuth performance, who was sufficiently brave to face the declarations of the Wagner family that whosoever took part in the Conried desecration should never thereafter be allowed to appear on the stage of the Bayreuth Opera House.

In the other leading parts we find the names of Milka Ternina, Louise Homer, Robert Blass and Anton Van Rooy.

* See *Scientific American* (N. Y.), No. 6, Vol. 90.

† See *Theatre Magazine*, September, 1907,—article on Bayreuth.

The initial performance was a triumph for Mr. Conried and the artists who took part. Besides the music-lovers to whom the production was a seemingly impossible wish come true, the one musical event of their lives, the great curious public flocked to hear it. Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler, the pianist, chartered a special train from Chicago for the performance, and the New York *Evening Telegram* issued a special edition, called the "Parsifal Extra."

Even Mr. Krehbiel, loath to give credit to Mr. Conried for anything, was compelled to confess the following:

"The greatest advance disclosed by New York over Bayreuth was in the design and manipulation of the magical scenes of the second act. Such scenes as that between *Parsifal* and the *Flower Maidens* were doubtless in the imagination of Wagner, but he never saw their realization. Up to the time of which I am writing, the Bayreuth pictures were exaggerated and garish. In New York every feature of the scene was beautiful in conception, harmonious in color, graceful in action, seductive as the composer intended it to be—as alluring to the eye as the music was fascinating to the ear."

The first five representations, of special performances at double prices, were concluded on January 21, 1904. But before that time, Mr. Conried had announced five more, besides a special matinée on Washington's Birthday. After the eleventh performance, on February 25, Mr. Conried gave out a statement that the receipts had been \$186,308—that is, an average of \$16,937. Twenty-four performances of the music-drama were given during Conried's management, the last in 1906, the production proving immensely popular and profitable to the Opera Company. It has remained an important feature of the Metropolitan repertory, and the Impresario always considers it his most noticeable production. It was a stupendous thing for Conried to do, apart from the moral question involved, and he accomplished it in a most authoritative manner.

It remains for us to comment on the impression created by Mr. Conried's pronouncement and actual production on the Press and on individual writers. We find the musical journals rather severe in their judgment of him, and a little hasty in their statements regarding the stand of the Wagner family as to Bayreuth and "Parsifal" itself. Such a conservative weekly as *The Outlook* was inclined to believe

that "Parsifal," like Shakespeare, belongs both to its creator and to the world. The writer claimed that Shakespeare, if he were living, would have both the legal and the moral right to receive revenue from every production of "Hamlet" or "Macbeth," but he should have no moral right to limit their production to Stratford.

On the score of the moral question, the papers were particularly vigorous in their defense of the presentation of "Parsifal," and one of them, in commenting on the attack of the Church, regarding the Metropolitan performances, wrote as follows:

"If 'Parsifal' is found objectionable, what will become of 'Lohengrin'? The *Knight of the Swan* is the son of *Parsifal*, as he himself confesses in the recital of his life. Will he have to be banished from every stage but that of the Festspiel House in Bayreuth? And if the clergy are to censor the Wagner operas, what will become of the Venusberg scene in 'Tannhäuser,' and the second act of 'Tristan und Isolde'? And what will happen when the complicated domestic ethics of the 'Nibelungen Ring' come into consideration?"

So the dispute went on.

But however downhearted Conried may have been in regard to the numberless criticisms made against him, and, on the other hand, however exalted he may have been on the night of the opening performance through the success he had made, he had his compensations other than the financial ones just quoted. Friends tell me that when they went to his little office on the evening of this notable première, they found him with his head bowed on his desk, crying like a baby. There was very much of the enthusiastic boy about Mr. Conried, which had nothing whatever to do with the morals of the case or the ethics of the production. His sense of humor must have come to the fore when he received a letter from Washington, dated January 2, 1904, which ran as follows:

DEAR MR. CONRIED:

Although the writer of this note is unknown to you, you have proven yourself so true a friend to every lover of music that I cannot resist the temptation to thank you personally for the feast of melody which held entranced myself and seven thousand of my contemporaries on Thursday of last week.

I went over from Washington to hear this stupendous lyric and dramatic wonder, and from five o'clock on Christmas eve till half-past eleven, I was nearer Heaven than I ever expect to be again. At the close of the Flower Scene, when you were finally prevailed upon to receive in person the plaudits of that vast assemblage, after breaking nearly every bone in my fingers in frantic contributions to the tempest of applause, I wanted to fly over the horse-shoe to the proscenium, and crush the breath out of your body in one rapturous embrace, and I am wildly jealous of Miss Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler and her golden opportunity. When I run over to New York again, keep yourself well protected by a body-guard, for I shall yet carry out my threat, if a kind Fate wafts me within kissable distance of the man who, by his untiring energy, patience, perseverance, versatility, and careful attention to every detail, has brought to a plane nothing short of perfection this triumph of stagecraft, and won the everlasting gratitude of every music-lover in America.

I am so glad you have shown to those people on the other side that Americans can, and do, appreciate what is highest and noblest in lyric art, and are capable of distinguishing between

a ragtime ditty and the glorious masterpiece of a heaven-inspired genius. It arouses in me the greatest indignation that the cynics of Bayreuth refuse to accept the fact that, even in a land credited with little more than the eternal greed for dollars, there are still hearts that can throb in sympathy with the work of the great master, and thrill with exquisite pain at its sublimity and pathos. It is my private opinion that, instead of the Yankees going abroad, the satellites of Bayreuth will be coming to New York to hear their beloved "Parsifal" interpreted as it should be, heretical as this may sound to the devotees at the shrine of Frau Wagner.

Had it been my good fortune to attend a dress-rehearsal, I would have done my best to spare you some of those many anxious hours by predicting with absolute confidence, in the correctness of my judgment, the brilliant success which crowned your labors of many months, and the royal welcome extended to the hero of the metropolis on December the 24th.

In this way are managers sometimes beset by over-enthusiastic admirers!

CHAPTER VII

AN IMPRESSION OF CONRIED. The seasons of 1904-5, 1905-6. A speech which raised a tempest. Opera novelties. Conried and the Unions. The San Francisco Earthquake. The Opera School. The National Art Theatre Movement. Conried's views concerning a National Theatre. His connection with the New Theatre.

MR. CONRIED, as an Impresario, was now in the full swing of his power. One of his boyhood friends, arriving in America, was met by him on the dock, and, in describing his renewal of an association of former years, he said:

I had not seen Conried for quite a long time, but when I did meet him, the "minor parts of the Conservatory" had become the "Directorship" of the Metropolitan Opera House. When he met me on the pier in New York, he looked at me with the same youthful eyes of faith in his own destiny. He was Americanized through and through, but his German idealism still shone in every smile, and especially when he talked. Besides, he had learned the great American quality of persistence.

This feeling of comradeship was not universally bestowed by Mr. Conried. He had his real friends. He had, likewise, his friends whom he thought it expedient to cultivate. In later years he was not over-cordial in his attitude toward the Press, but those who remember his first months of settlement and adjustment are unanimous in declaring that Mr. Conried always had time to devote to a talk with representatives of the leading newspapers. He was always genial with the reporters, handing around his famous cigars, and giving them picturesque "copy."

Often he would be found in the writing-room, reserved in the Opera House for the musical critics, and at times he even went so far as to instruct these critics in the intricacies of the work at hand. On the whole, it may be said that his productions were received fairly and generously by them.

He used to narrate the following incident which occurred to him during the Metropolitan's visit to Chicago:

"A very young reporter kept pestering me for an interview. I told him I had arranged to see the Press at five. But he would not be put off. So I said:

“‘If I give you an interview, it will have to be while I am taking my bath.’

“He consented eagerly, and, after I had turned on the water, he began:

“‘What do you open with?’

“‘I open with “Tristan und Isolde,” I told him.

“‘Ah,’ he said, writing busily. ‘Have they ever been here before?’”

Conried’s production of this music-drama was especially fine, as was also his new production of “Die Meistersinger,” which, as put on by Anton Fuchs, called forth unparalleled enthusiasm among Wagnerites. This was during the season of 1904-05. All this time, Mr. Conried continued to profit by “Parsifal,” although its edge was taken off by the unlooked-for success which greeted Henry W. Savage’s company, touring the country in an English version of the same opera. The season was also distinctive for a rehabilitation of Strauss’s “Fledermaus,” which called down upon Conried a severe criticism on the part of the critics, who thought that he might have expended his time to better advantage in other directions, especially as the revival was to be given for Conried’s benefit, at which many “stars” were com-

pelled to appear, even though they had no singing parts in the operetta. It was during this performance that Mr. Conried suddenly disappeared from Box 48, leaving his wife and son alone. A short while after, they discovered him, in make-up, stirring the chorus to greater effort. Ten minutes later he was in his box again. In like manner, during the next season, Conried spent much of his time and energy in preparing a production of Strauss's "Der Zigeunerbaron" for his own personal benefit.

On the evening of February 9, 1904, the Association of Theatre Managers of Greater New York was formed, with Mr. Conried as President, to hold office for one year. On his retirement from that post of honor he was presented with a copy of Resolutions in praise of his conduct of the office, and was thereafter elected a Director. His efforts as a member of that organization were mainly involved in the settling of labor questions, and in reforms for the betterment of the artist's position on the stage. He was a member of the Actor's Fund, where he originated the ten-cent tax scheme, to raise money for erecting an Actor's Hotel.

The first annual banquet of the Association was given at the Hotel Astor, on February 9,

1905,* and among those present were Daniel Frohman, Marc Klaw, Charles Burnham, Joseph Brooks, Bronson Howard, Oscar Hammerstein, Brander Matthews, A. M. Palmer, Lew Fields, Timothy Sullivan, Sam S. Shubert, and Percy Williams. Among the speakers on that occasion were President Frank S. Lawrence, of the Lotus Club, and Messrs. Matthews, Conried and Howard.

During his talk, Mr. Conried threw aside all reserve, thinking himself among his confrères and not subject to interpretation by the Press. He, therefore, entered very specifically into the expenses and the profits of opera management, taking special satisfaction in giving numerous instances abroad, when his financial figures were not believed by the impresarios of the foreign opera houses. He meant his criticisms in good faith, fully realizing what he owed to the American millionaire in opera revenue, but the Press laid such stress upon his attitude that he was obliged to follow his speech with a formal statement a few days after, explaining himself a little more guardedly. What he had tried to point out was that the Metropolitan received no subsidy, in the European sense of the

* On February 6, 1907, the Association gave another banquet, and during the evening sent greetings to Mr. Conried, who was too ill to attend.

word; but, apart from the income derived from the boxholders, depended very largely for success on the support of the general public. Had Mr. Conried known that members of the Press were present, he would not have thrown his customary reserve aside for a business chat such as he gave to the assembled guests. He, therefore, took occasion, in his letter to the public, which explained his motives on the night of the Theatrical Managers' dinner, to express the cordial relationship which existed between the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company and himself, especially acknowledging his debt to the Executive Committee, consisting of Messrs. Haven, Juilliard, Mills, and Baker.

Early in 1905 there occurred an accident on the Metropolitan stage, which nearly resulted in a dire tragedy. During one of the performances of "Carmen" (January 7, 1905), a bridge broke, precipitating a number of choristers into the depths below. Fortunately no lives were lost, although the affair was sufficiently serious to be accounted as one of the "events" of the opera season.

When Mr. Conried left on his annual pilgrimage to Europe that year, the papers referred to him as the "Baron of Opera." He was now ready for some of that stress and

strain to which we have already alluded in our description of the duties of the Impresario. During the months of June, July and August, we find him writing long letters as usual to his "stars," engaging new ones, and advising his singers where to go, when to sail, and what to study. He was busy, during this trip, on a new production of "Manon," and, as one of his letters indicates, was finding great difficulty in securing an Italian singer who would be pretty, and, as he expressed it, not fat. He mentioned one he had seen, whose voice was everything that could be desired, and yet who, because of her appearance, he felt sure would not be liked in America.

While abroad, he made it a habit to get up early, and to take a two hours' walk before breakfast. He was very reserved, and never told others of his business affairs unless he had to. Though he wrote many letters, correspondence was a bugbear to him—so much so, in fact, that one of his agents cabled him once, "For God's sake, answer!" He would often make marginal notes on a letter, and return it to the writer in reply.

So engrossed was he in all of his preparations, and so much a slave was he to the work he had in hand, that the suddenness of his trip to Eu-

rope deprived him, as we have already seen, of a Master's Degree which Harvard University was anxious to bestow upon him.

His contracts for the new season of 1905-6 included such singers as Bella Alton, Emma Eames, Nordica, Sembrich, Tetrizzini, Edyth Walker, Caruso, Journet, Conotta, Plançon, Scotti, and Van Rooy. He was likewise corresponding extensively with the agent of M. Dalmorès, in the hopes that an agreeable understanding could be reached between that singer and himself.

It was certain, in all of his negotiations during this summer, that Mr. Conried was maintaining an iron grip on the time of his singers. Even a request from Miss Farrar to sing at a concert, almost a year in advance, was very emphatically refused. In the same tone, Mr. Conried dealt with the many agents who had the destinies of various singers in their hands. Nor was he saved minor details; sometimes, in asking a singer to begin practicing, he would find out that there was no piano within reach, and, at his own expense, would have to send an instrument to whatever obscure place the artist might be. To judge by his different letters, Conried must have been enjoying a new

motor car, for he is continually mentioning it in a most naïve way.

One of the first novelties he gave on the opening of his new season was the production of "Hänsel und Gretel," on November 25, 1905, at which the composer, Engelbert Humperdinck, appeared in the conductor's chair. The next novelty was a revival of Goldmark's "The Queen of Sheba." *

Of these two special productions, it may be said that while the Goldmark opera has never seemed worthy of revival since then, "Hänsel und Gretel" entered as a permanent addition to the Metropolitan repertory, largely adding to its popularity through the fact that it is one of the few operas which, in music and story, is suitable to the younger lovers of music.†

It would seem as though, in some directions, Fate was dealing a heavy hand against Mr. Conried. On the evening of January 13th, there was a strike of the choristers in the Metropolitan Opera House, which lasted three days; and though, on this special occasion, the audience may not have known it, when there was a sudden substitution of "Faust," they saw a performance wherein Mme. Eames and Signor

* See Krehbiel's "Musical Season, 1885-86," page 55.

† See "Modern Drama and Opera," for bibliography, pp. 161-168.

Caruso and all the rest of the "stars" helped to increase the chorus when they were not needed on the stage in their respective rôles.

Caruso recalls the evening with a special relish. The great labor contention was in regard to Conried's attitude toward trades-unionism. It was found, for example, that in the orchestra of the Metropolitan there were two women harpists who did not possess cards of membership to the Musical Protective Association, and when the matter was brought to the attention of Conried, he declared that his was an "open shop," that the orchestra, to his mind, did not come under the rules and regulations of contract-labor, and that if they consented so to be classed, they would be belittling their profession.* No sooner was the chorus called out in sympathetic strike, than Conried showed his independence by gathering around him a non-union chorus; those who had been in his employ probably thought that it was proper time for them to demand higher wages. When the matter was looked into, it was found that while the Impresario was perfectly willing to concur with the desire of his chorus, he was emphatically

* During this year of 1916, the Actors' Equity Association has agreed to propose an affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. The old fear of being identified with the "hod-carrier" is disappearing.

against being dictated to by the Union, and he presented a brave front when the Central Federated Union threatened to tie his hands by calling a general strike of every one in the Metropolitan Opera House.

The situation assumed the proportions of a heated battle between the Impresario and his chorus. It seems that even a special plea made by Mme. Eames to the women was of no avail. In the midst of a performance of "Parsifal," Mr. Conried took the occasion to exchange opinions regarding the situation with his singers. The orchestra, under Nahan Franko, remained loyal, and as far as the chorus was concerned, Mr. Conried reaped the benefit resulting from his establishing an Opera School. He called upon the pupils in the different classes for aid. It was fortunate that he was able at so short a notice to put on a production of "Faust," which would have about it a certain gala atmosphere. For, in it, Mme. Eames made her first appearance that season as *Marguerite*. Those who were present could scarcely have recognized that the distant chorus in the Chapel scene was largely the orchestra and the organ, while, in the street scenes, the soldiers came in to the blare of a brass band! During the evening, the Impresario appeared before the

curtain—a thing he rarely did in his whole career—and, begging the indulgence of the audience, proceeded to lay before them his views regarding labor-unions *versus* art.*

Out of the chorus, there were seven members who did not respond to the call of the Union. These devoted followers of Mr. Conried, even after he retired from active management, were loyal in their adherence to their Herr Director, and were never-failing in their messages of affection to him.

It was during January, 1906, that Conried had a long and tedious controversy with New York Police Commissioner Bingham, on the subject of Sacred Concerts, once more bringing the Impresario into court over a matter which had harassed him while he was active manager of the Irving Place Theatre. The question was argued extensively in the Press, and helped to clear the public attitude toward a form of amusement which has remained a regular feature of the Metropolitan Opera House season ever since.

But, however much Mr. Conried may have been sorely tried by his conflict with the labor-unions, he was on the eve of an even greater disaster—one that came near ruining the financial prospects of his season. I refer to the

* "Strike at the Opera," *Theatre Magazine*, February, 1906; *Musical Courier*, December 9, 1903, page 21.



The portrait of Emma Eames
 in the collection of the
 Emma Eames - 1874

New York
 9.4-

EMMA EAMES

Handwritten text in the bottom left corner, possibly a signature or date, which is mostly illegible due to fading.

Metropolitan's share in the San Francisco earthquake disaster.

First of all, it was a managerial triumph on his part to carry such a large organization as his so far west as the Coast, and everything bid fair to be a most triumphal march across the Continent. In fact, the feat was actually accomplished, and the Opera opened in San Francisco, at the Grand Opera House, on Monday, April 16, 1906. The great tragedy took place two days after; all scenery was destroyed, but fortunately the singers escaped unscathed. "The Queen of Sheba" was given on Monday, "Carmen" on Tuesday, and on Wednesday afternoon the "Marriage de Figaro" was to have been sung, with "Lohengrin" as the evening production. It is said that the two performances actually given drew \$20,000, and there was an advance sale for the fourteen performances of \$120,000. Practically the whole of the company, representing a great galaxy of "stars," was in the city at the time. Sembrich lost her entire wardrobe, valued at \$20,000, and the scenery, stage sets, musical instruments, and costumes, went up in flames at a loss to the organization of \$150,000. One can imagine Mme. Fremstad in the wreck of the St. Dunstan Hotel, helping the wounded

and the dying. One can see the humor as brought out both in pictures and in interviews by Caruso,* in the descriptions of his plight, as he sat in the middle of the street, astride his valise—all that he was able to save at a moment's notice. For three days no news could be obtained as to the safety of the "stars," and during that time the Metropolitan Opera House was besieged by inquiring friends. After many hardships, the company reached New York, April 24, 1906, and united in a monster benefit for the San Francisco sufferers, which took place on May 4, 1906.

During the summer of this year, Conried, with his secretary, Miss F. Hoops, had their headquarters at Bad Gastein, and it was here that most of the preparations for the season to follow took place.

During all the activity on his part, there was only a little time for the Impresario to devote to other matters which might demand his care and attention. In fact, we hear that, in 1906, so overburdened was Conried with work, that he did not have leisure to devote to the Metropolitan Opera School, which he was so instrumental in developing when he became Director of the affairs of the Opera House.

* Caruso on the Earthquake, *Theatre Magazine*, July, 1906, with Cartoons.

It was in January, 1906, that Professor A. Remy, of Columbia University, joined the staff of the Metropolitan Opera School in the capacity of teacher of German, and it is his conviction now that, had Mr. Conried's health not broken, this school would at present be one of the great musical influences in the country. Mme. Jaeger was the singing teacher, M. Petri had charge of the Italian, and Mr. Lester had charge of sight-singing.

Founded in 1903, the School existed until 1908, when it was given up. But Mr. Dippel, when he assumed charge of the Metropolitan during an interregnum, established a chorus school somewhat on the same order. Dr. Remy declares that Mr. Conried believed strongly in cultural centres and forces, and spent much money in matters which he was assured, in his own mind, would never reap him any considerable financial return. He would often give receptions for the Opera School in the lobby of the Opera House, when scenes from the operas would be enacted by some of the seventy or eighty pupils, who were usually entered in the class. At one time, even, Mr. Conried went to the great trouble of giving special performances of the Conried Metropolitan School of Opera, at the Irving Place Theatre, where

the expenses were far in excess of what might have been expected—this excess being willingly shouldered by himself.*

It was during the year 1905-6 that the Repertory Theatre idea was again agitated, with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, the public attention being somewhat ready for the discussion, inasmuch as there had previously been in existence an organization calling itself "The National Art Theatre Society," under the kindly direction of Mr. J. I. C. Clarke—an organization which brought before the attention of the theatregoing population of New York the lack of any organized support for an Art Theatre in this country.†

* Dr. Remy, speaking of Conried's association with Columbia University, calls attention to the fact that he was an Honorary Member of the Columbia Deutscher Verein, making a number of addresses before that organization. In April or May, 1905, he celebrated with Columbia in honor of Schiller, on that occasion declaiming. See account of the Schiller Centenary, May 9, 1905, at Columbia, by Professor Rudolf Tombo, Jr., in *The Columbia Quarterly*, September, 1905. Professor Remy reinforces Professor Carpenter's statement that Conried gave a series of lectures on German dramatists at the Irving Place Theatre, circa 1901-2, himself hearing the discourse on Schiller.

† In a souvenir booklet, issued by the New Theatre for its opening on Saturday afternoon, November 6, 1909, we find a very succinct review of the purposes and plans of the institution; likewise an account of its origins in 1891. Mr. H. B. McDowell founded the "Theatre of Arts and Letters," which produced, among its very few successes, a one-act play by the late Clyde Fitch. In 1897, the *Criterion Magazine*, edited by Mr. J. I. C. Clarke, provided the funds for producing a series of plays. Mr. Charles Henry Meltzer was associated with the move. Mr. John Blair was one of the actors. In 1899, Mr. Emanuel Reicher came from Berlin and produced "Ghosts," the immediate result of this per-

Conried was evidently approached by Mr. Barney in regard to the possibilities of erecting a theatre devoted to a repertory, and it was this beginning which eventually resulted in Mr. Conried's becoming the first General Administrator, through placing in his hands the responsibility, not only of selecting a site for such an institution, but of preparing the physical proportions of the building itself. Upon his foundations, both actual and intellectual, the New Theatre, on Central Park West, was raised in after years. Whatever preparations Mr. Conried may have made in decisions regarding the plans of the building, there is no doubt that his ambitions as an Impresario, and his far-seeing calculations in regard to himself, made the New Theatre building much larger than it should have been for the ordinary purposes of a repertory organization. However that may be, from the time this agitation began until, through ill health, Mr. Conried was obliged to relinquish immediate control of affairs, he was ever ready

formance being a series of lectures on modern plays. Mr. William Archer at this time also visited America, and exploited the idea of a National Theatre. In 1904, Mr. J. I. C. Clarke founded the "National Art Theatre Society." In October, 1906, a "New Theatre" was begun in Chicago, under the directorship of Mr. Victor Mapes. During their repertory of French, English, and American plays, they produced "El Gran Galeoto" and Hauptmann's "Elga." All this time New York had had the opportunity of viewing Mr. Conried's efforts at the Irving Place Theatre.

to discuss the scope of such a theatre, his idealism and his enthusiasm serving him in good stead. Among his papers I find a discussion of the New Theatre, under his signature, which is of especial interest, as reflecting, not only what he had learned himself from the success of his Irving Place Theatre, but what he had drawn from the policies of the theatres on the other side, during his numberless visits abroad. He wrote:

The need of a great, model playhouse in this country, similar—so far as local conditions may allow—to such world-famous theatres as the *Comédie Française*, of Paris, and the Burg Theater, of Vienna, has long been evident.

On landing in New York, a stranger, thirty years ago, one of the first things I observed, with much surprise, was the absence here of even one subsidized or artistic theatre, such as existed in every capital and in many less important cities of Continental Europe.

In my own Fatherland, and in every part of the Continent, I had been accustomed to seeing the Stage acknowledged and respected, side by side with the Church and the School, as an uplifting, civilizing, and educational influence. Here, to my amazement, I found that it was

regarded merely as a means of entertainment and amusement. To speak of the "mission" of the Stage—of its uses as an improver of morals or a reformer of manners—was to invite ridicule. There are still many, even now, and in this city, who are sceptical as to the true value and usefulness of the stage.

Before long, however, it became one of my most cherished dreams that I might, some day, find it possible to promote the foundation of an artistic theatre in the new land which I had made my home.

At first, I had to content myself with dreaming. Later, after I had grown familiar with American habits and American thought, I became convinced that the realization of my hopes was not only desirable, but also possible, and that the organization of an institution, comparable to the National- or State-aided theatres of Europe, could be effected, even without subsidization, in the usual sense of the word, with both artistic and financial success.

For fifteen years or more, whenever the occasion offered, I lectured in the American universities on the need of a National Theatre in this country.

I pointed out that, if founded and organized according to my suggestions, it could in a

short time be made to support itself. In order to assure the establishment and prosperity of such a playhouse, it was essential, in the first place, that an appropriate, dignified, and handsome building should be erected and equipped with a stock (or, as they say in Germany, a *fundus*) of costumes, scenery, and "properties," sufficient to allow of the artistic productions of, say, ten or fifteen standard plays.

The theatre would have to be built on the most careful plan, advantage being taken both in the designing of the auditorium and in the construction of the stage, workshops and store-houses, of the most admirable examples of the most modern playhouses of Europe and America. Comfort, safety, and the pleasure of the audience in the "front" of the house, besides safety, mechanical perfection, and the promotion of theatrical illusion behind the curtain, would all have to be considered. The proportions of the stage and of the auditorium would be determined by the purposes of the productions. For practical reasons, the auditorium would have to be large enough to seat as many persons as could plainly see and hear the actors—and no larger.

Spacious stairways, lounges, promenades, and other adjuncts of the great European

playhouses, were not to be omitted from the ideal theatre.

In many informal talks, as in more formal addresses, I expressed my belief that a National Theatre would be welcomed here, not only by all who were professionally interested in education, but also by all parents who had the education of their children at heart.

I also showed that the projected playhouse would be accepted as the standard with regard to the pronunciation of English and foreign words, costuming, scenery, archæology, and manners.

From the very outset, and before the opening of the institution which I had in my mind, it would be indispensable that the community at large, and playgoers in particular, should have the certainty that whatever they might hear or see in the National Theatre, would be absolutely as it should be.

To make this possible, I suggested the formation of committees, recruited from among the authorities and specialists of the world, including professors of universities, critics, painters, sculptors, and others, whose mission it would be to assist the Director of the theatre by deciding vexed questions as to pronunciation and empha-

sis, manners, costuming, and so forth, and who would act in an advisory capacity.

I laid stress on the importance, and indeed necessity, of vesting the supreme and final responsibility of management in the hands of one man, guided by the recommendations of the executive committees.

Then, turning to the vital question of the principles which should be adopted in the composition of the repertory, I suggested that the first aim of an educational theatre should be to make our playgoers familiar with the most famous standard plays of all times and nations, from the tragedies of ancient Greece to the dramas and comedies of the golden ages of Spain, France, England, Italy and Germany, and so on to the great works of our own day, no matter whether they might be due to the genius of Norwegians, or Germans, or Americans.

By the production of the best standard works of the whole world, in my belief, a taste would be improved, the invention of American writers would be stimulated, and before long an American drama, in the high sense of the word, would be called into existence—plays would be invented which, besides being representative of the national life and character, would have permanent literary value.

Here, as in the countries of the Old World, one great object of a National Theatre would be the creation and interpretation of a national drama.

I proposed to build up a repertory which should include Sophocles and Calderon, Molière and Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller, Sheridan and perhaps Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Sudermann, and Hauptmann.

Once the National Theatre*—that is to say, the building—had been erected and properly equipped, I estimated that it would take five years to compose a repertory which would make it possible to vary the programmes every evening.

Long runs—the curse of the American stage—would be abolished.

Assuming that the annual season would last thirty weeks, say, from October till May, I suggested that ten plays, of permanent literary and dramatic value, should be produced in the first year.

The actors in the National Theatre company would be engaged, at the outset, for periods of from three to five years. It would thus be possible each season to add ten plays to the repertory. On the conclusion of the fifth sea-

* It had not been renamed the "New Theatre."

son there would be fifty standard plays to draw upon, while, if it became desirable, the bills could be varied from night to night indefinitely.

To quicken the activities of American dramatists, I advised that a prize should be offered for the best play, of literary merit and dramatic significance, by an American. A committee would select three or more of the most hopeful works sent in. Special performances of all these would then be given, and the one which seemed to the committee most worthy would receive the prize. The committee would decide whether the winning play should or should not be added to the permanent repertory.

The composition of the company, not the last of the difficulties incident to the scheme, would be left entirely to the Director of the theatre. His aim would be to organize a body of intelligent and accomplished players, capable of assuming many different parts, and working unselfishly for the general good, the honest and artistic interpretation of the play, and the pleasure of the audience. Anything that reminded one of the "star" system was to be discountenanced, and the honor of forming part of the National Theatre Company was to be set higher than mere notoriety or ephemeral prominence.

The actors would not be required to travel; and, gradually, those of them who remained in the company would be admitted to the benefits of a Pension Fund. Thanks to these inducements and to the prestige which would be gained by appearing in the projected theatre, I had no doubt whatever that an admirable aggregation of actors would be formed.

A School of Acting was, in my scheme, to be the logical complement of the theatre.

Lastly—and this point caused me a great deal of anxious thought—I suggested a way by which theatregoers, even with modest resources at their disposal, might be enabled to enjoy the educational advantages offered by the National Theatre, and, by steadily supporting it, help to perpetuate its prosperity.

Ten new plays, as has already been stated, would be produced each year—one every three weeks. I proposed that subscribers should be allowed to reserve an entire box for one performance of each novelty (in all, ten performances), for \$250.00. Orchestra seats, also for one performance of each novelty, would be obtainable for \$25.00 (\$2.50 for one performance every three weeks). Other seats, in the balconies and gallery, or family circle, would be obtainable, by subscription, for sums ranging

from \$2.50 to \$5.00, \$7.50, \$10.00, \$15.00, \$20.00, and \$25.00 for the series of ten performances. That is to say, for an outlay of from twenty-five cents to \$2.50 per performance, it would be possible to enjoy the entire repertory, and become acquainted with the dramatic literature of the whole world.

I am as certain now as I was long years ago that the plan which I have outlined is reasonable and practicable.

There are countless actors of intelligence in America and in England waiting to be discovered and moulded into artists. There are many American and English writers, of great natural gifts, hungering for the opportunity of proving that they have dramatic as well as literary ability.

The interest of the American public in drama is insatiable. It needs only guiding to be diverted from the trivialities of the moment to more serious and uplifting objects.

It matters little whether the playhouse of which I dreamed long years ago be known as the "National" or as the "New" Theatre. What matters is that it should be built and used for the promotion of taste and the refinement of manners.

It should be, not merely a place of amuse-

ment, but, also and chiefly, an educational institution.

In his various lectures upon the art of the theatre, Conried constantly advocated such an endowed institution. He published a sheet on the subject, in which he reinforced his argument in the following way:

Our schools [he said] are supported by public taxation—our universities by the munificence and the philanthropy of our high-finance. Our libraries we owe, partly to the bequests of whole estates, and largely to the liberality of one multi-millionaire, who has also spent money freely in the cause of scientific research. As for our churches, they are generously provided for by myriads of open-handed believers. But our dramatic art, less fortunate, has had to struggle against fearful odds, and has been abandoned to commercial enterprise.

How can this anomaly be remedied? How can we reform a state of things which allows one, and perhaps the most popular of the arts, to languish in neglect? In one way, and, I feel, in one way only. By the foundation of a National Theatre.

Education is a matter of public interest, and should therefore not be left to the mercy of

commercial enterprise. For good or evil, the stage is a great public force. At its best it is as surely a public educator as the pulpit or the school. The citizens of Athens knew this truth more than two thousand years ago. Among their rights, and their most cherished rights, they had free admission to the public theatre. The citizens of Norway, Hungary, Portugal, Servia, Spain, and even so obscure a country as poor little modern Greece, insist on the maintenance of a National Theatre. As for the French, they boast of their great Théâtre Français, while the German-speaking nations point with pride to the existence of that temple of their drama, the world-famous Burg Theater.

Before the stage can take its right place in this country—before it can hope to fulfil its mission as a refining and an educating influence—the civic consciousness of the American people must be awakened to its power and usefulness. The American people must dignify it with its sanction and endorsement. The public recognition of the stage would mean the uplifting of dramatic taste, and, as æsthetics are closely akin to ethics, this, we may be confident, would, in the natural course of things, lead to the improvement of public morals.

The drama of the world comprises a complete representation of human motives. But no single play, good, bad, or mediocre, can more than partially and imperfectly reveal motives or portray character. A theatre which is compelled by financial considerations to present the same play, night after night, for perhaps many weeks or months, cannot be regarded seriously as an educator. A changing repertory is absolutely essential to the educational mission of the stage. Give us a National Theatre, and we shall be able to play upon the whole register of human passions, to lash all conceivable follies, and to kindle all emotions that make for the ennobling of the collective soul of the people.

The American Shakespeare, who is to raise dramatic monuments to our national heroes, is still unborn, or, if living, lives in obscurity, barred from the stage, which either cannot or will not recognize him. Give us a National Theatre, and, soon or late, we shall have our American Shakespeare.

Through the continual presentation of the standard plays of all nations, in as nearly perfect a manner as possible, a National Theatre would raise public taste—it would encourage the cultivation of higher ideals—it would lift

the art of acting in this country to a position of excellence, and, in all probability, lead to the creation of an American dramatic literature.

The public is like a little child. It can be taught—it can be led and educated. The National Theatre would be a standard for the pronunciation of English words. True, we already have this standard. But how many teachers in our schools—be they public or high schools, colleges or universities—how many actors on our stage, how many of our representatives in Congress—pronounce English correctly? In our leading theatres, one and the same word in one play is, as we know, often pronounced differently by different actors. In a National Theatre this would be an impossibility. The pronunciation would be absolutely and undeniably correct, would never be deviated from, and would be accepted by all actors throughout the United States—nay, by society itself—as authoritative. The great art of diction, in a broad sense, would also be fostered, till it at last approached perfection.

The National Theatre, moreover, would be the standard of correctness in matters of costume, scenery and manners. It would, indeed, become the standard for a hundred and one

things for which there is not, and never yet has been, a standard.

A National Theatre with a constantly changing repertory cannot be established in one year. To do what the Théâtre Français of Paris and the Burg Theater of Vienna do—that is, to change the bill nearly every night, and certainly not less than three times a week—we need not less than six years. After six years the repertory would include not only the world's classics—Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe, Schiller, Sheridan, Bulwer Lytton—but also plays by the best modern authors—by Ibsen and Hauptmann, Sudermann and Sardou, D'Annunzio and Tolstoi, and even the light comedies of men like Pinero, Bronson Howard, Henry Arthur Jones, and Augustus Thomas. American authors would have a generous hearing in the national playhouse. The objection that native authors would prefer the long runs and large profits offered by the ordinary theatres to the short run necessarily given each play by a National Theatre, is not sound; for it would become a matter of pride with American authors to have their plays produced at the American National Theatre, as in Europe is the case with authors who have their plays performed at the Burg Theater and the Théâtre Français.

American plays, which had had a hearing and made a success at the National Theatre, might go on tour and make even more money than they do now, thanks to the extra advertising they would get from the fact that they had been interpreted at the representative American playhouse. Actors, again, would be ambitious to become members of this National Theatre, for the sake of the distinction which their appearance on its boards would give them.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that a National Theatre could be established here, and that, contrary to the prevailing opinion, it could be established *without great sacrifice of money*. *All I think necessary is that a home should be built for the National Theatre, with all that is essential to such a house.* The capital required, which I estimate at \$3,000,000, would be provided by, say, thirty stockholders, each of whom would contribute the sum of \$100,000. Each stockholder would own a box, in perpetuity, together with a proportionate interest in the National Theatre property, which would be unencumbered by mortgages.

The building erected for the purposes of the National Theatre should, like the art of which it would be a symbol, be dignified and beautiful. It should be worthy of the American people.

Externally, it should, I think, be stately and simple. Internally, it should be comfortable and harmonious. Plans for the theatre should be prepared by eminent architects. The stage appliances should be of the most modern kind. The accommodation provided for the members of the company should be liberal and appropriate, while all imaginable precautions should be taken to protect both audiences and actors against fire. Once the plans were approved, it should be possible to open the National Theatre within two years. And the cost of acquiring the land required, and of building the theatre, would involve no loss to those who had supplied the capital. The original outlay would be more than guaranteed by the inherent value of the property, which would grow steadily rather than diminish.

It was this spirit which prompted Mr. Conried, and undoubtedly it was his initiative which induced those gentlemen who had for so many years backed opera with their financial support, to come together and determine to give patronage to the drama as well. The first President of the organization, which selected Mr. Conried as administrator, was Mr. Charles Barney.

The original plans for the New Theatre,

coming under the personal supervision of Mr. Conried himself, and placed in the hands of Messrs. Carrère and Hastings for execution, were based on the precedents established at the Wagner Theater in Bayreuth.

Much of the technical planning was given over to Mr. E. Castel-Bert, who worked in close consultation with Mr. Conried. In fact, there is a letter, dated as late as March 4, 1908, from the architects, which shows what a moving spirit Conried was in the New Theatre plans, up to the very last moment when illness forced him to relinquish all control. Messrs. Carrère and Hastings communicated the following:

DEAR MR. CONRIED:

In reply to a letter which we wrote to Mr. Kahn some time ago, asking for instructions as to whom we should deal with concerning all matters pertaining to the stage and other technical features of the New Theatre, and expressing the hope that we should continue to have your collaboration and that of Mr. Castel-Bert, we have been advised by Mr. Kahn that it is the wish of the Directors that we should continue to act under your guidance. The work has reached a point where it is absolutely neces-

sary that we should have repeated conferences as in the past with you and Mr. Castel-Bert, as there are a number of points which must be settled without any further delay.

Under date of March 5, 1908, is the following communication:

DEAR MR. CONRIED:

Replying to your favor of March 4th, in which you ask us to state definitely the nature of the expert services which will be required from Mr. Castel-Bert, we would state that we cannot lay too much stress on the value of the services which he has already rendered us under your direction, and which have consisted, as you know, in the first place, in the planning of the whole scheme of the stage and its dependencies; in other words, the establishing of the whole method of handling the stage work and of housing the stage personnel and machinery. This has entailed a great deal of thought and study, and many conferences with this office, followed by constant revisions and improvements of the plans, until they have arrived at their present state of development.

Of course, up to the present point the details have been worked out only so far as necessary for us to develop our plans and to pro-

vide for all of the spaces, the proper sizes and the proper relation, also to make provision for all of the mechanism and other important features. What we need now is the same kind of expert advice with regard to the development of all of the details of the various features of the stage business. These can be divided generally into five classes, namely:

First, All of the work relating directly to the stage and its mechanism.

Second, All of the installation and details relating to the dressing-rooms and other services.

Third, A detail study of the orchestra pit and its mechanism.

Fourth, The development, in all of its details, of the stage lighting, switchboard work and general electric control.

Fifth, As far as it is now provided for, the installation of the school.

These letters emphasize the tremendous responsibility which was placed upon Mr. Conried's shoulders, and, though their detail suggests a massiveness which indicates how unwisely the ground-plan of the New Theatre was conceived, this all the more convinces us that Mr. Conried must have had ideas in his

mind for the use of the building other than for general theatrical purposes; he must have foreseen the possibility that, should the New Theatre venture prove a failure, the building itself would be available for the purposes of opera, or concert work, or large spectacular productions—a destiny which actually befell it.

Mr. Conried was not one to shirk any of the details, once the responsibility was in his hands. In his work, both as Director and Impresario, he exhibited a thoroughness which characterized him throughout his professional life. There is extant a memorandum, in his own handwriting, wherein he details the physical aspects of the New Theatre building he had in mind, as thoroughly as he outlined in his foregoing papers the general spirit which should actuate any repertory theatre in America. Even though he did not live to see the accomplishment of his dream, there is no doubt that his name was prominently to the fore when the New Theatre finally opened. One of the papers (*The Times*) even went so far, on the morning after the dedication, to publish an editorial called "In Memory of Conried," and to credit him with the genius and energy which lay behind the inception of the idea and the construction of the building. For "the play-

house on Central Park West is not an outgrowth of any of the many futile schemes of the past, looking toward the establishment of a National Theatre, an 'advanced' theatre, a theatre of art and letters. On the contrary, it is the realization of an idea born in Conried's brain, revealed by him to the Founders, and planned under his eye and according to his conception. . . . It was he, and nobody else, who inspired the Founders to build and equip the house."

However much of a failure the whole enterprise in its physical aspects may have proven itself to be, it still remains that Mr. Conried's belief was strong enough to start in motion an idea which has never since then left the mind of the American theatregoing public. But it is well to bear in mind the fact that, however much Heinrich Conried may be connected with the original organization of the New Theatre, the final plans were materially changed from those he had personally conceived.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEASON OF 1906-7. Correspondence about "Salome." "Manon Lescaut." "Madame Butterfly." "Salome" in rehearsal. Opinions for and against. A testimonial from the Opera Company. The Directors interpose. Conried's formal statement. Resolutions after the withdrawal of "Salome."

DURING the Metropolitan season of 1906-07, the repertoire was augmented by seven operas: Giordano's "Fédora," given for the first time on December 5, 1906; "La Damnation de Faust"; "Lakmé," which had been absent from the list for many years; "L'Africaine," "Manon Lescaut," "Madame Butterfly," and that centre of discord, "Salome."

From the very moment Mr. Conried went abroad in the summer of 1906, his correspondence was filled with details in his preparations for "Butterfly" and "Lescaut," and we find repeated cablegrams and telegrams and notes regarding his negotiations with Strauss for his opera. Not only that, but he was promising the rôle of *Salome* to many different "stars," some of whom, in all probability, looked askance

at the honor of appearing in the sensational opera.

As late as July 15th, from Bad Gastein, Mr. Conried wrote to Richard Strauss, claiming that his demands for "Salome" were practically unheard of. He said:

If Director Loewe intends to stage your work during the season of 1907-08, his plan is based on total ignorance of the matter, and will never reach fruition unless he desires to pay us a very colossal sum. Until now I have never paid in any operatic performance more than \$75 an evening for the author's rights, and, in the case of this new manuscript, which has won such a colossal success, I have promised \$250 for the evening, guaranteeing four evenings. In return for which the publisher bound himself to loan me, without cost, the entire score. . . . I have already mentioned that the subscription list in the Metropolitan Opera House, as you can very readily find out, is so large for next season that I have not an empty seat to sell for any evening. The performance of "Salome" on one of these evenings is almost impossible, for the reason that my audience would not be satisfied to recognize as sufficient a performance which lasts at the most only one

hour and twenty-five minutes, even if it is such a wonderful work as "Salome." I also don't know how the American people will take to the subject, and I have simply said that, even at the risk of my audiences not liking the material, I, as Director of the Metropolitan Opera House, would be bound to produce your opera before my audiences—an opera which I, personally, and unendingly, admire.

For this purpose, I am ready to make a great financial sacrifice, covering the equipment, the large orchestra, the many rehearsals, the difficult casting of the principal rôles, as well as the minor parts which, according to my opinion, require first-class talent as well. In other words, I am ready to make the performance a very dear one.

In spite of all this, I am willing to pay you the highest author's royalty that I can give you, provided you yourself direct the first performance. I am willing to grant you an evening's salary of \$500—a salary which has never been paid an Opera Director anywhere in the world. . . . You want five "Salome" performances guaranteed for the second season, with an evening's salary of \$750. If you direct a performance in the second year, perhaps it will be worth that, in case "Salome" is a success the

first year—which you take for granted and which I most sincerely wish. If, however, my audiences, despite all the greatness of your work, dislike the opera, in what a situation would I find myself then?

After going into more financial details with Strauss, Conried ends his letter in the following way:

If “*Salome*” should really find the expected success which both of us hope for it, I shall probably give the opera more often, and it can stay in the repertoire. That is the only possible point of view. Everything else oversteps the bounds of what I can afford, financially, and simply cannot be done. I should like your opinions by return mail, and hope that they will be of my way of thinking.

This correspondence, which continued in many directions, pointed to a doubt in Mr. Conried’s mind as to whether the Strauss opera would be denounced by the opera-going public. But he was not deterred in any way during his negotiations through the summer.

Conried had given Puccini’s operas firm place in the repertoire of the Metropolitan, and during this season the composer himself came to

America to lend *éclat* to the occasion. He was received by a crowded house and greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm and excitement.

At the first performance of "*Manon Lescaut*,"* on the evening of January 18, 1907, Signor Puccini did not reach the Opera House until toward the middle of the first act, and very quietly he slipped into the Director's box. But, much to his surprise, he was saluted by the orchestra at the close of the act, and the audience gave him a round of applause—an applause which utterly disconcerted him, and made him nervously withdraw. It was after the second act, however, that he sent the following message, written in French, to the Press: †

I have always thought that an artist has something to learn at any age. It was with delight, therefore, that I accepted the invitation of the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera House to come to this new world of which I saw a corner on my visit to Buenos Ayres, and with which I was anxious to get better acquainted. What I have seen to-night has already proved to me that I did well to come here, and I consider myself happy to be able

* The opera had been given previously at Wallack's Theatre, in May, 1898, by an Italian company.

† As quoted by Mr. Krebhiel.

to say that I am among my friends, to whom I can speak in music with a certainty of being understood.

"Madame Butterfly" * was now put into rehearsal as the next production for the Metropolitan Opera House, but it must not be forgotten that the American public was familiar with the Puccini music, inasmuch as the opera had already been given in English by the Henry W. Savage Company, and the music had been heard in concert. The drama had likewise, on the dramatic stage, served as an excellent vehicle for Miss Blanche Bates, the play having been originally taken from Mr. John Luther Long's story of the same name, and brought to artistic perfection by Mr. David Belasco.

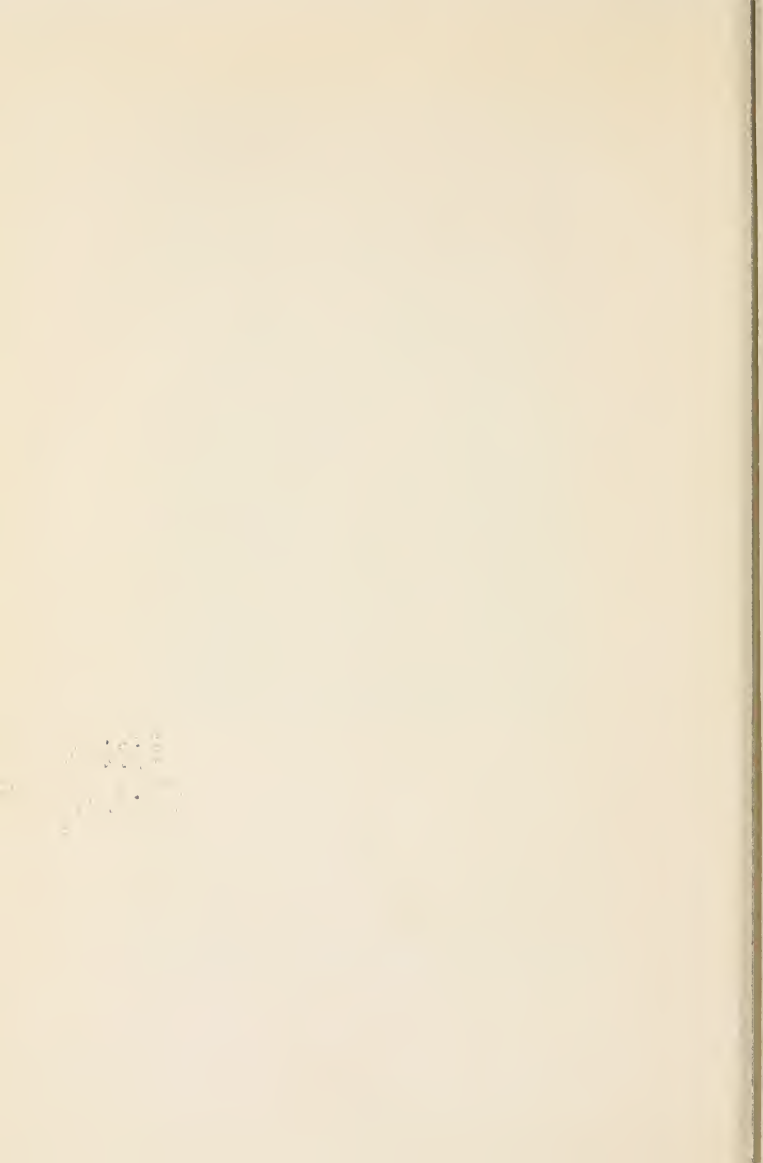
When Conried decided to present Miss Farrar in the chief rôle of *Cio-Cio-San*, he asked Mr. Belasco to co-operate with him in his first attempt to create a faithful atmosphere. Practically every "property" Mr. Belasco had was put at the disposal of the Metropolitan Opera House, Mr. Belasco himself going over to direct some of the rehearsals. In fact, when asked about these rehearsals, Mr. Belasco always points a moral and adorns a tale; he never fails

* For bibliography on Puccini, see "Modern Drama and Opera" (Boston Book Co.), pp. 212-226.



To the Hon. Mr. [illegible]
 Manager of the [illegible]
 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

GERALDINE FARRAR



to show how painstaking, how enthusiastic, how full of energy, the opera singers were—going over scene after scene in a way which would put the average actor to shame. It was during these rehearsals that Mr. Belasco began to recognize the marvellous histrionic ability of Miss Farrar—an ability which made him try at that time to persuade her to desert opera for the stage.

For that initial performance, Caruso appeared as *Pinkerton*, the detective, a part which later was assumed by his great personal friend, Riccardo Martin. The opera was an instant and permanent success, and it determined Puccini, then and there, to seek Mr. Belasco's aid in preparing another libretto for his next work. The result of these conferences was the acceptance of "The Girl of the Golden West," which Puccini went to see with Mr. Belasco during a supplementary run of that play in New York at the Academy of Music.

This season at the Metropolitan may be considered the high-water mark of Mr. Conried's régime.

It was a fortunate thing that the year was a successful one, for it enabled the Impresario to replace the nineteen operas destroyed in the San Francisco fire. When one considers that

it was during this season that Mr. Conried's illness first began to show signs of its inevitable grip upon him, and when one realizes the multifarious details connected with the Metropolitan, the Irving Place Theatre, and the New Theatre that crowded in upon him, one can get a fair idea of the killing pace which compelled him beyond his weakening strength. His extreme nervousness over executive affairs was further increased about this time, and the first pronounced signs of an illness which was to prove fatal were brought on by a most disagreeable episode which dragged Signor Caruso into the civil courts, and which filled the papers with considerable gossip in regard to singers in particular and blackmail in general. It was the long periods of court attendance which helped to aggravate the illness of Mr. Conried. In addition to which there were excitement and uncertainty in his mind as to whether "Salome" would be a success, and, despite the fact that he was a sick man, he insisted on keeping his hand firmly upon all the details in preparation for that opera. In fact, many of the rehearsals for the production were conducted at Mr. Conried's bedside, so interested was he in the outcome.

All the opera world became agog with the

announcements Mr. Conried made from time to time in regard to his progress on "Salome." * It was regarded as a move in the direction of decadence, and cartoons were published, making Mr. Conried the hero of a most unsavory notoriety. Madame Fremstad, upon whose shoulders fell the responsibility of interpreting the rôle, was working hard in preparation for the auspicious event. In the pulpit, Conried was being denounced every Sunday, and altogether, long before the performance was tested, the public was placed in full possession of all the gory details, which serve to make this opera so repulsive—not only in subject matter but in theatrical treatment. For Strauss was one of the most *ultra* of the German composers. He followed every craze that beset the art world around him, and allowed himself to be carried by the current of the "blond beast" philosophy. As pointed out by the critic of the *Evening Post* (New York), he had not only written his metaphysical song, "Thus Spake Zarathusa," during the wild fad of Nietzsche; he had not only catered to lovers of the *uberbreitl* school

* See Arthur Symons, "Studies in Seven Arts"; files of *Musical Courier* for January and February, 1907; an interview with Strauss *in re* "Salome," in *New York World*, Wednesday, January 30, 1907; Lawrence Gilman's discussion of "Salome, Art and Morals," in "Aspects of Modern Opera." Also see *Theatre Magazine*, March, 1907.

by writing "Feuersnote," but he now catered to the Oscar Wilde craze in Germany by composing the opera under discussion—one which the Kaiser himself censored! As one critic said, "Compared with *Salome*, *Manon Lescaut* and *Violetta* are angels." *

So persistent were attacks on all sides, and so speculative did the public become as to whether Conried would be allowed to give the opera, that the Impresario, driven to the wall, made announcement in the public Press that under no conditions whatsoever would he be prevented from producing "Salome"—if not in the Metropolitan Opera House, then in a theatre, for special matinées.

A dress rehearsal was given several evenings before the regular benefit performance,† and to this not only were the Directors and critics invited, but many friends were asked, with the idea of gaining some consensus of opinion. If the decadents of France in the early days of Maeterlinck strove to create a new "shudder," certainly they were far surpassed in gruesomeness and gory character of the incidents by "Salome." We remember the repulsive scene in D'Annunzio's "Francesca da Rimini," as

* See Bibliography of Strauss in "Modern Drama and Opera," pp. 227-244.

† "Salome" was produced for the Impresario's "benefit."

played by Duse, when *Malatestino* brought a severed head upon the stage, wrapped up in a red napkin; the *Salome* scene with *John the Baptist* was much more repulsive, and had Mr. Conried been anything of a timid Impresario, he would have taken warning by that Sunday evening performance.

Preparations went on, and the hour of the first presentation, January 22, 1907, arrived. It is claimed by friends of Mr. Conried that, in spite of the fact that rehearsals of "Salome" were conducted in his sick room, with Ernest Goerlitz continually at his beck and call, if he had been a well man, if he had been able to keep his strong, sensitive hand at the helm, results might have been different, and the startling effects might have been toned down. But the current was too strong for him to steer safely through the dissenting voices of the stockholders, the old subscribers, and the management.

The cast, on the opening night, consisted of Fremstad as *Salome*, Burrian as *Herod*, Van Rooy as *Jochanaan*, and Andreas Dippel as *Narraboth*. Mr. Hertz conducted a full orchestra.

The production, like every opera staged by Mr. Conried, was a brilliant one. Krehbiel,

in an analysis which is complete in its estimate of the *morale* of the opera,* admits its supreme and beautiful musical moments. He quotes W. P. Eaton's descriptions of the scenery, which at that time was the last word in decorative art—a period before the advent of Léon Bakst, and before the theories of emotionalism and mood as illustrated by the Russian Ballet.†

But he felt that his position was greatly strengthened by the fact that his company, to a man, was back of him, inasmuch as they had taken this auspicious occasion, when he was harassed on all sides, and furthermore incapacitated by the increase of his illness, to tender him a formal testimonial, bound in leather and signed by everyone at the Opera House, from the highest to the lowest; it was dated January 22, 1907.

This testimonial, in the form of Resolutions, read as follows:

It is with the warmest and most sincere sympathy that we, the artists, technical staff, and administrative staff, of the great Opera House which, for the past four seasons, you have so ably and successfully managed, beg you to accept the assurance of the admiration which we

* See his "Chapters of Opera," pp. 343-57.

† Josef Urban, nevertheless, was designing for Conried.

feel for you as the Director, and the esteem with which we regard you as a man.

We realize how crushing are the labor and the responsibility of watching over and defending the interests of Grand Opera in so great and important a theatre as the Metropolitan Opera House; and we have deeply regretted that, as a consequence of the exceptionally severe strain to which for many months you have been subjected, you have been obliged to pass through a painful and lingering illness, and have had most unwillingly to absent yourself in the body, though, as we are well aware, not in the spirit, from your headquarters.

The daring enterprise, the liberality, and the artistic intelligence which you have shown during the past four years, have proved you to be preëminently fitted for the high duties attaching to your position. We have been impressed by the artistic beauty and thoroughness of your productions of works never before given in America, and of your revivals of older works which, thanks to the manner in which they were presented, had, to the opera-loving public, almost the appearance and interest of novelties. Your production of Richard Wagner's "Parsifal," in the first season of your management, will forever remain memorable in the operatic

annals of the United States. The production of "Die Meistersinger," with the beautiful stage pictures, in the following season, came as a revelation. Equally admirable were your revivals of "La Giaconda" and "Aïda."

Nor was your will to satisfy the long-felt want of the New York public for operatic novelties at all lessened by the terrible catastrophe in San Francisco, at the end of last season, which destroyed so large a part of your stage equipment.

Misfortune, indeed, merely quickened your determination to fulfil your mission, and the season now under way has already been characterized by more new productions than all previous seasons at the Metropolitan Opera House. The successful presentation of Giordano's "Fédora" was followed by Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust," in a way which earned the enthusiastic approval of both the public and the Press. After a brief interval, we saw a remarkable revival of Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine." A week later came the production of Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," which was honored by the presence of the composer, and, as the crowning achievement of the season, we have this evening been made acquainted with the most complex and extraordinary of music-dramas, Richard Strauss's "Salome." Before

the season ends, we may also count on hearing Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" and Cilèa's "Adriana Lecouvreur," and a revival of Wagner's "Der Fliegende Hollander."

To have attempted more than one stage production at a single season would, not long ago, have awakened wonder, but you have sometimes placed, not merely one, but, as in the present season, eight or ten stage achievements to your credit, and we know how truly you have paid for your devotion.

We trust that, during the remaining years of your Directorship, you may continue to win fame and favor, and that, in your efforts, you may ever be assisted by the sympathy of the public, the loyalty of your staff, and the affection of your company.

Two days after the première, Mr. Conried was requested by the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company to withdraw "Salome," as it had been found objectionable, under Section 3 of the lease of the house. It was said that Mrs. Herbert Satterlee, daughter of J. Pierpont Morgan, had used her influence with her father for the withdrawal of the opera. The staging had cost Conried something like \$25,000, and he was

confidently anticipating a triumph. Here are the resolutions sent to the Impresario on January 25th:

"The Directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company consider that the performance of 'Salome' is objectionable and detrimental to the best interests of the Metropolitan Opera House. They therefore protest against any repetition of this opera."

Such a mandate on the part of the Directors was hastened in view of Mr. Conried's announcement, after the evening of his benefit, that "Salome" would be given for three special performances, open to the regular opera-going clientele. This action on the part of the Directors was the beginning of Mr. Conried's increased failure in health. He recognized the request as the exasperating triumph of a small and prudish group, and he expressed, with characteristic vigor, his just grievance in the following communication (January 30, 1907):

*To the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan
Opera and Real Estate Co., New York.*

GENTLEMEN:

In reference to your letter of the 25th instant, protesting against further performances

of "Salome" at the Metropolitan Opera House, we beg leave briefly to state our position:

Strauss's "Salome" is recognized by the consensus of the most competent critics of modern music as a monumental work, probably the greatest which musical genius has produced in this generation. It has been performed in more than twenty European cities, including many of the foremost Court Theatres, in which a strict standard of censorship prevails. In Berlin, the Emperor, who, as King of Prussia, is the official head of the Protestant Church in Prussia, at first refused his consent, but, after further consideration, withdrew his objection, and it is now being played at the Royal Opera House there, to enthusiastic audiences.

It is a commonplace to state that the libretto of all operas is a subordinate feature, and that what people go to hear is not the text, but the music. Not a few of the operas of the classical repertoire are based upon plots, and contain language, which would be decidedly objectionable if they were not overshadowed and idealized by the beauty of the music. In the same way, the grandeur and compelling interest of Strauss's music is such as to detract attention entirely from the text which, moreover, is sung here in a foreign language, and which, even by

Strauss himself, has been held to be so subordinate to the orchestral composition that, when told that the orchestra, augmented to over one hundred men, would drown the voices on the stage, he said, "I don't care if it does. Never mind the voices or the words. Bring out the music of the orchestra, regardless of the singers."

The only religious personage in the work, *John the Baptist*, is depicted as a sublime and beautiful character, and treated with dignity and reverence. The hideous deed of *Salome* is duly punished by swift death.

However, we are not concerned in defending Oscar Wilde's text, though much that has been said against it is based upon wilful seeking for hidden motives—meanings and imaginations in no way apparent from the text—but *we do claim that the opera should be judged as a musical, not as a dramatic, work.*

Many of those most violently criticizing the opera have never witnessed its performance, and base their attitude upon sensationally exaggerated reports. It may be remembered that the appearance of Richard Wagner on the musical horizon, not so many years ago, was greeted with a storm of hostility and villification. We take issue with the statement that

Strauss's music is of the same character and tendency as Wilde's text; on the contrary, to quote only one instance, it is perfectly apparent that the "Salome" music, after the death of *John the Baptist*, clearly means to indicate the turning of her passion into a purified love and deep contrition.

After the enthusiastic reception accorded to the work in Europe, where its performance everywhere was considered a musical event of the first magnitude, we considered it our obvious duty to bring it before the New York public. We believe we may claim to have produced it in a thoroughly artistic and dignified manner. The bringing of the head of *John the Baptist* upon the stage followed all European precedent, but we had arranged, after the first performance, and before receipt of your letter, that, in subsequent performances, except for one short moment, it should be entirely hidden from the view of the audience.

We do not desire to go into the question of our respective legal rights in this matter, and only beg leave to call attention to the following facts:

(1) We refrained from producing the opera on subscription nights, as we particularly wanted to avoid imposing it on any unwilling

listener, and to present it only to those purposely going to hear it.

(2) As long ago as last October, you were advised of our intention to perform "Salome," but neither at that time, nor during the months of rehearsals at the Opera House, nor after the final dress-rehearsal, to which all the stockholders of the Metropolitan Real Estate Company were invited, and at which some of your Directors were present, was any objection made. It was not until three days after the first performance, and two days after the public announcement of the additional performances, and when a large sale of tickets had already taken place, that your protest reached us. We have received a vast number of letters expressing admiration for the work, or a desire to hear it (amongst others from several clergymen, and from some of the highest musical authorities in this country); and the quantity and quality of the applications for tickets for the announced performances tend to show that the large majority of the music-loving public of New York are desirous to hear the work, and would be grievously disappointed at its withdrawal.

We shall not speak of the heavy expenses and commitments which we have incurred in

connection with the performance of this opera, nor of the very considerable loss, and possible litigation in which its withdrawal would involve us. We believe we may justly claim that, in our administration of the House which you have leased to us, we have at all times shown ourselves conscious of the dignity and prestige of the Metropolitan Opera, and we may be permitted to state that we have in this spirit sacrificed a considerable source of revenue by declining all applications for balls and other entertainments and exhibitions, such as used to be given in former times at the Metropolitan Opera House, confining ourselves strictly to its use for regular operatic performances and concerts. No financial or other considerations would have induced us to perform "Salome" in this house, had we not felt that its merit, as a superb work of art, entitled it to be heard.

In conclusion, we beg to say that we recognize, with profound appreciation, the debt which the musical public of New York owes to your Board for the splendid service which you have rendered to the cause of art by erecting the Metropolitan Opera House, by establishing for it an unparalleled prestige and position, by insisting, from the beginning, upon the

highest standard of operatic performances, and by making financial sacrifices, year after year, to maintain the Opera during the long period when Grand Opera in New York meant loss and disappointment.

Feeling toward your Board as we do, we deeply regret its disapprobation, and it is a matter of the keenest disappointment to us—as it doubtless is to the great artists who have proven their admiration of and enthusiasm for the work by their superb interpretations of their respective parts—that what we had looked upon as a genuine artistic achievement, should meet with your protest. Though sincerely convinced of the justness of our contention, we shall abide by whatever may be your final conclusion. But in loyalty and good faith to the composer, who gave us the preference over other applicants for the right to perform his work, to the splendid singers and musicians, who have studied and worked for months to produce a performance rarely equalled in the excellence of individual accomplishment and artistic ensemble, and, finally, to the thousands of people who have purchased tickets, we are bound earnestly to urge that you will reconsider your position, at least to the extent of acquiescing in the three performances which

were advertised, and for which tickets had already been sold in large numbers before your letter reached us.

Very respectfully yours,

CONRIED METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY.

At a meeting held at the offices of Mr. George G. Haven, the President, it was found that Mr. Conried had a number of supporters, among them Otto H. Kahn, Robert Goelet, R. L. Cottenet, James Speyer, and Henry Rogers Winthrop; but the majority vote carried the day, and so the following resolutions were passed:

Resolved, That while the Directors of the Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company regret the disappointment and loss which may be caused the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, they cannot in any way either modify or withdraw their protest of January 25th, and hereby object, in accordance with Section 3 of the lease, to the performance of the opera "Salome" in the Metropolitan Opera House.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed by the President to confer with the Conried Metropolitan Opera House Company, as to what proportion, if any, of the expense

thus far incurred in the opera "Salome" should equitably be borne by this Company, and to report the recommendations as soon as practicable to this Board.

While the arguments as to this latter clause were being subjected to a close scrutiny by the members of the Board, it is stated that Mr. Morgan objected to the expense proposals being left in abeyance; that rather than leave the matter in an unfinished state, he declared he should prefer to pay the entire loss himself.

After its withdrawal, the opera was not again seen in New York until Mr. Hammerstein was well advanced in his régime at the Manhattan Opera House.

CHAPTER IX

THE END OF MR. CONRIED'S RÉGIME. His failing health. His relationship with some of the Metropolitan Directors. Plans for the new season. Talk of resignation. An interview about Opera Management. A performance of "Tristan und Isolde." Caruso. The Conried Testimonial. His last trip abroad. Mme. Rappold. His trained nurse. Conried's death. The return voyage. The public funeral. Remarks of Charles Burnham. Professor Carpenter's Funeral Address. Comments of the Press.

WHILE preparations were being made for Mr. Conried to go abroad during the spring of 1907, it was recognized on all sides that his health was failing rapidly, and that, despite his willingness and ambition to maintain his activities at the usual speed of development, he would be obliged to relinquish his hold on some of them. One of the first considerations in his life had always been the Irving Place Theatre, but, as the duties of the Impresario engrossed more and more of his time, he was obliged, bit by bit, to place the responsibility on the shoulders of those regisseurs who were representing him in Irving Place. The *New York Herald*, of April 9, 1907, made the announcement of Mr. Con-

ried's final withdrawal from governing the policy of the German Theatre in New York. Not only that, but even when he was sufficiently recovered to undertake occasional trips to his office, Conried was accompanied to and from his house by a trained nurse, Miss Clark, who first met him at the Opera House, during the latter part of 1906, at a dress rehearsal of "La Damnation de Faust." The "Salome" incident, together with other matters of policy, had served to estrange Mr. Conried from much sympathy and support. Many were disgruntled by the fact that, in place of an active head of the Opera House, they were subject to one who was so often incapacitated by illness. It is very evident, not only in notices that from time to time crept into the Press, but from correspondence, that Mr. Conried was to be heckled by his Board of Governors, and it looked at times as though efforts were being exerted to persuade him of the necessity for his resignation, even though his contract with them had not yet approached its termination. On the other hand, many of Mr. Conried's associates called on him to persuade him to take a rest; they assured him what they most desired was his restoration to health, and his continuance at the head of things. The tenor of the following

note, sent to Conried from Paris, at the instigation of a group of the Directors, is significant:

The Directors are informed on the best authority that Campanini is and has been all along prepared, upon proper invitation, to sign a contract with our Company on the same financial terms as he now has with Hammerstein.

It has been reported in the papers that Knoté has been engaged by you for twenty performances, at \$1,875 per performance. The Directors take it for granted that this report is entirely erroneous, as far as the compensation is concerned, and would like to know what are the terms proposed for Knoté's engagement. It is also reported that the contract with ——— has been renewed for four years; as far as they are aware, the question of the renewal of this contract has never come before the Executive Committee, and they assume, therefore, that this report is likewise without any basis in fact.

Mr. Richard Strauss has told Mr. ——— that he, as well as his publishers, have repeatedly, but vainly, tried to get into communication with you, and that offers from other houses are being made to them for the performance of "Salomé" in America. Without attaching

undue importance to the latter information, would it not be well to conclude arrangements for "Salome," without showing eagerness, but also without overmuch delay?

Have you considered the question of producing Strauss's "Feuersnote"? The Directors do not wish to be understood to be recommending this, as they do not know the opera, but merely would like to know your views regarding the question.

Trusting that your recovery is progressing steadily . . .

When he went abroad, Mr. Conried was practically under the care of a Swiss medical expert, and while the public fully comprehended the precariousness of his health, in no way was his indisposition regarded as a detriment to the following out of his foreign opera policy. In fact, Conried was regarded by musical circles in Germany and in Austria even then as an ever-increasing peril, inasmuch as he had at his disposal sufficient resources to take from the foreign opera houses the very cream of their singers. It must not be forgotten, as Mr. Finck has pointed out, that from Vienna came Edyth Walker; from Berlin, Farrar; from Munich, Ternina, Morena, Knote, and



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Reiss. The Vienna newspaper, *Zeit*, even went so far as to suggest that a "Directors' Trust" be formed against Conried; for, not only was the Impresario taking their singers from them, but he was likewise reaching out for the Directors—Mottl in Munich, and Mahler in Vienna.

Mr. Conried went immediately to his home in Steinach, where he did most of his work, and was under the constant supervision of his trained nurse. The mode of life he lived and the personal interests that helped him during his periods of rest—for Conried scarcely ever took a real vacation—were simple. He revelled in card-playing, and in entertaining his friends with the latest card trick which he may have been taught by some prestidigitateur. Suffice it to say that, in spite of his illness, the plans for the new season rapidly progressed, however much he may have been limited in his ideas regarding novelties. There was, in fact, only one novelty, Francesco Cilèa's "Adriana Lecouvreur," with Lena Cavalieri in the title rôle (November 18, 1907).

All during the final year of harassment, which included innuendoes on the part of various people concerning Conried's policy as an Impresario, the stricken Director was receiving letters from his admirers, deploring his absence

from the Metropolitan, and showing their loyalty in many ways. They longed once more for the iron hand which had ruled the Opera House. As if further to increase his immediate anxiety, his correspondence with a brother in South America by no means helped to quiet his mind.

When Mr. Conried returned to New York for his fifth season, his health scarcely improved by expert care, it became evident to his friends, and even to his own persistently courageous spirit, that he had reached the point where he would be unable to cope with the ever new problems and endless minor difficulties of the Opera House. He was now almost continually on crutches. Although finally persuaded that his resignation would at last be necessary, the Impresario, against all advice, determined to finish out the season, and he managed still to keep a firm hand on details. A friend who at this time went with him to an evening performance of "Tristan und Isolde," says:

Mr. Conried entered the box on crutches, and dropped heavily in a chair. He was obviously very ill. But he watched the stage as if he were observing its drama for the first time. Presently he frowned, and pressed a button.

To the attendant he gave directions that the footlights should be further lowered. Softly their light dimmed a moment after; and the delicacy of the scene was marvelously enhanced. Again and again the slave of the button was summoned, and Mr. Conried ordered some change of lighting or some electrical effect, or some precaution for the next scene. It was as a matter of fact one of those nights when every singer seemed in especially fine fettle; when he stage pictures and illusions seemed achieved to the heart's desire, and the audience sympathetically appreciative.

At the close, Mr. Conried turned to me, his sunken eyes sparkling: "Aus geseichnet. Nicht wahr!"

This little incident in itself throws an interesting light on the way in which, even during an actual performance, the Impresario from his box could make changes and give directions without perceptibly halting anything.

It is scarcely incumbent upon us to go into details of the new season, inasmuch as Mr. Conried's health became so precarious—an illness which the doctor's described as sciatic neuritis—that, on February 11, 1908, he was forced to resign.

It is useless to enter into a discussion of the details attendant upon the resignation of Mr. Conried, inasmuch as they involved business conditions that had nothing to do with the pros and cons of the Impresario's artistic régime. The correspondence between him and the Directors was voluminous, and covered many questions of financial management and legal defining. The case of Mr. Conried against the Conried Opera Company involved a long and tedious discussion before matters were finally brought to a satisfactory issue. It was the newspapers, however, that strove in every way to make it appear to the public as though insuperable misunderstandings existed between Conried and the Directors. But every time such rumor was spread abroad, Conried would be reassured of the good-will of the Directors by some testimonial. It was after the death of Mr. Conried that his widow, for the sum of \$58,000, settled the claims of her husband against the Metropolitan Opera Company.

At this juncture there was another argument among the members of the Board of Directors as to who should fill the remaining time of Mr. Conried's contract, and after the resignation was acted upon,* the company was immediately

* On Conried's resignation see *N. Y. Times*, January 24, 1908, and *N. Y. Herald*, February 12, 1908.

reorganized, with Giulio Gatti-Casazza and Andreas Dippel as joint Directors. During the discussion of Mr. Conried's successor, Mr. Juillard was firm in his determination that no one should be appointed without the endorsement of the Director.

Whatever may have been the attitude of some of the members of the Real Estate and Opera Board, there is no doubt that as a body they were grateful to Mr. Conried for the amount of work he had done—gratefulness which found expression in framed Resolutions, signed on April 3, 1908, by the Metropolitan Real Estate Company, and sent to him. In the meanwhile, Mr. Conried allowed himself to be interviewed in the New York *Herald* of February 16, 1908, in which he exclaimed that the game of opera management was not worth the candle.

"When I took hold of this institution, what do you think was the state of affairs?" he asked. "The stage had not a single properly placed trap. Its system of electric lighting was the most primitive, its stage mechanism and methods were absolutely primitive. . . . I started in to revolutionize the whole system of conducting opera as it had been bequeathed to me by Maurice Grau. Instead of employing the

stage hands for only a few months during the short season of Opera, I made them an efficient corps, well drilled, by increasing their number and efficiency, and by employing them for the entire year. I extended the term for the engagement of the orchestra so that rehearsals could be held weeks before the season began, and the chorus was also employed for a longer time."

Then Mr. Conried emphasized the fact that he had so far recast the repertoire, there was no longer any need for endless repetitions of the same opera. This called for a great deal of careful planning, and was rewarded, on his part, by the success of a system which never repeated on the same subscription night during a season the same opera, unless a sudden change of cast made the repetition desirable. He continued: "There was the establishment of the Opera School, which has succeeded in making it possible to have excellent choruses in 'Meistersinger,' 'The Flying Dutchman,' and 'Mannon,' and the pupils of which have appeared to excellent advantage as Flower Maidens in 'Parsifal.'"

Conried was frank in his declaration that he thought it impossible for New York to sustain two opera houses at the same time, and he de-

clared that his last season at the Metropolitan had cost over a million and a half dollars in expenses.

"It has been remarked that a spirit of commercialism has prevailed here during the present régime. This criticism," he declared, "is unjust and foolish. I shared in the profits of the company more than any other person; so, if I had run this opera house in such a way as to make the financial results as large as possible, if I had managed it with primary regard for the dollars, I assure you that I could have made a fortune by my share of its profits and salary."

But, as Mr. Conried naïvely remarked, his fortune was nowhere within his immediate sight.

Caruso, on hearing of his resignation, wrote:

"Please accept the expression of my sincere regret at your retirement from a position which you have filled with so much honor, ability and assiduity, in the interests of art and its development in this country. I assure you, my dear Mr. Conried, that I shall always retain the most pleasant recollections of our mutual relations, both personal and professional."

Whatever the complications, and whatever the feeling directed against Mr. Conried by

individuals, nevertheless, when the time came for a Conried Testimonial, on Tuesday evening, March 24, 1908, at which most of the "stars" appeared, the loyalty of the Conried public was seen by the fact that the box-office receipts amounted to \$19,119.

In addition, whether or not there were business difficulties with the organization Mr. Conried represented, the Directors of the Metropolitan took this time to present him with a silver loving-cup as a mark of their esteem.

To judge by the correspondence preserved of the last two years of Mr. Conried's life, it may readily be seen that his friends were fully aware of his critical condition, however much they may have hoped that the constant attendance of various experts might result in a favorable chance for him. He went abroad, finally, in the spring of 1908,* accompanied by his wife, his trained nurse and his son. He was 'nervously overwrought, and, in his effort to find a suitable climate, he was continually shifting his residence. In July, 1908, he visited his sister, Mrs. Lena Essler, in Vienna. In February, we find him in the Tyrolian Mountains, at Meran, a famous watering-place in the valley of the Adige, at an altitude of 1,050 feet above

* See N. Y. *Evening Post*, editorial, April 27, 1909.

the sea. It is protected by mountains that rise ten thousand feet above the town. It is dry, cold, well-sheltered, and is particularly favored as a winter and spring resort.

Madame Rappold, who was much with Conried at this time, says:

"I know that he himself believed he would get well. He was the most patient of sufferers. Every day he would walk, and every day a little farther. We would count his steps. And how I wished for his recovery! He had done all for me. What I am, I owe to him. He had the courage to put an American singer on the Metropolitan stage, and he did many fine things that he kept secret."

Not only on the testimony of his trained nurse, but on the constant reiteration of his many friends, it is well to emphasize a marked characteristic of Heinrich Conried during this time. While he was sick, he was a perfect child in heart. One never felt lonely in his presence. Sometimes, as he sat in his wheelchair, he would put a shawl over his head and play that he was an old woman, or rumple his hair and say that he was the bust of Beethoven, which, for so many years, occupied a place of honor above the door of Schirmers, the music publishers, in New York.

On March 30th he was at the Hôtel Du Cap Ampeglio Bordighera, Italy, and, finding no relief from the pain which so constantly weakened him, he returned to Meran, where he was stricken with paralysis, and with inflammation of the lungs. Here it was that he died on April 27, 1909. Even in his death, the Metropolitan Opera House profited, inasmuch as his life was insured by them for \$150,000.

No sooner did the news of Mr. Conried's death reach America than pressure was immediately brought to bear on Mrs. Conried to consent to a public funeral. She finally cabled her willingness, and Mr. Dippel, then administrative manager of the Metropolitan, in the name of the Directors, offered the Opera House.

On May 11th, the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*, carrying Conried's body, Mrs. Conried, and their son Richard, arrived in New York. This trip back was to have been the Impresario's hundredth voyage, and his death came as a personal loss to the Directors of the line. A dramatic coincidence was the *Cecilie's* meeting, as she approached her pier, the outward-bound *Kronprince Wilhelm*, carrying many artists who had sung at the Metropolitan under Conried's management—Scotti, Zenatello, the tenor

lent by Hammerstein, Maria Gay, and Geraldine Farrar, whom Conried had first presented.

The body was taken to the Conried home, where it remained until May 13th, the date set for the funeral.

Four thousand invitations to the services were issued, and the supply was immediately exhausted. At least twice that number of persons endeavored to gain admittance, while a body of police tried to keep the crowds in order. The funeral cortège passed down Broadway toward the Metropolitan Opera House, and people stood on the sidewalk with uncovered heads all along the route.

The doors of the Metropolitan were opened some time before the hour set for the services. The immense auditorium was in darkness, except for the stage, and the great crowd waited in silence. The stage itself was set for the second act of Verdi's "Falstaff," with added funereal touches, most conspicuously placed in the centre of the stage being a catafalque of six steps, covered with black cloth, and standing seven feet high. It took over four thousand yards of black crêpe to cover the proscenium arch. The catafalque was literally banked in floral decorations and cut flowers.

At the home of the Conried family, the ortho-

dox funeral services of the Jewish church were conducted, inasmuch as Mr. Conried was himself a devout Jew. The officiating minister was Edward Karlschmaroff, Rabbi of Benai Jeshurum, who had married Mr. and Mrs. Conried. Only members of the family and intimate friends were present.

After that, the steel coffin, completely covered with white and purple lilacs, was taken to the Opera House, where it rested from ten o'clock until noon, guarded on both sides by seven candles, according to the Jewish law. At the head of the catafalque stood a bronze bust of the Impresario. Among the many floral tokens were those sent by Mr. and Mrs. Andreas Dippel, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Weil, Mr. Edward Seidl, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Boas, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Untermeyer, Mr. Otto H. Kahn, and hundreds of small, carefully selected sheafs of blossoms, sent by those whom the dead manager at some time in their career had helped.

The programme had been arranged as follows:

At ten thirty, Bach's Funeral Dirge, and several other selections, were rendered, until the arrival of the funeral party. It was then that the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra played

Beethoven's Funeral March, from the "Eroica Symphony," while the cortège, headed by the Reverend Dr. Stephen S. Wise, and Professor William H. Carpenter, of Columbia University, entered the Opera House. After a Scriptural reading, the Parsifal Choir rendered Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

Just before the funeral address, Mr. Charles Burnham, representing the Theatrical Managers' Association, said a few words of eulogy. He spoke of "Heinrich Conried, public servant, to whom we gather to pay a farewell tribute." It was appropriate, he said, that the last honor should be paid him in the place where he reached the zenith of his fame. "He served the public faithfully and well, and nothing more appropriate could be placed on his tomb than the words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

It fell to the lot of Professor Carpenter, his close friend during the period when Mr. Conried was making his reputation as Director of the Irving Place Theatre, to deliver the funeral address. As he outlined the dead man's career and ideals, his voice shook with emotion:

It is difficult for me to speak at this time of Heinrich Conried—much more difficult than

I had thought could well be the case, for he was the close friend of many years, and as I have been sitting here, so many memories of a friendship, singularly unbroken and unclouded, have crowded in upon me, that I am almost overwhelmed at the sense of my personal loss in his untimely death.

My memory goes back to the days when I first saw him, a young actor of brilliant promise at the Stadt Theater, in Leipzig, when I was a student of no particular promise at the University in that ancient city. When, a number of years after, I had come back to America, and subsequently to New York, to take up a position in Columbia College, I found him the actor-manager that he had become in the city of his adoption. The Leipzig days and the German stage were the germs of an acquaintanceship that soon ripened into a friendship that is one, and will ever be one, of the fragrant memories of my life.

I knew from many sides this many-sided man. I knew him, as many of you have known him, as an actor of extraordinary ability and insight; as the manager who, on account of his training as an actor in the best schools, had an appreciation of the stage that can come in that way alone; as the eager, ambitious, and

apparently self-centred man of affairs in a commercial city. But I knew him, too, as I think not all of you have known him—as a scholar and as an idealist.

By training, he had become the scholar. For the old world idea of the dignity of the calling of the actor is not that he shall merely know the lines of the play that he acts, to deliver them, but that he shall know in very truth whereof he speaks. And I found him a storehouse of ideas on the inner significance of the many plays in the extraordinary repertory of the German stage, living and acute beyond any written commentary, and with an intimate knowledge of the history and the tendencies of the German drama, and of dramatic literature, more personal and intimate than I had ever found in books.

By temperament he was an idealist, for, in whatever he did, however sordid and business-like it might have appeared on the surface, there was inevitably back of it and beyond it the undying fire of ideality.

His untiring efforts at the little German theatre in Irving Place, and in this great Metropolitan Temple of Music, were only means to an end—the necessary means to an ideal end—that always beckoned him upward and on-

ward—something better beyond that led to renewed effort and to higher aspirations. And this is as I like to think of him to-day—as the scholar and the idealist—and it is as others, too, will like to think of him, now and in the days to come, for I am not alone in this estimate of him. When the Irving Place Theatre had become, as it presently did become under his efficient management, a notable place for the performance of German plays, he was first asked by Columbia, and then by others of the great universities and colleges of the country . . . to lecture before them on the German drama, and to produce under their own auspices the classics of the German stage.

All this he did ably, and in truth memorably, without any thought of remuneration, but as done in the service of the art which was his calling, whose knowledge it was the desire of his heart to foster, and whose ideals it was the ideal of his life to set on high.

This is the man of whom we think to-day, a man of his day and generation who firmly trod the earth in a worldly and materialistic community, but whose eyes were ever directed to the stars. This is the memory that he has left, irrevocable, ineffaceable in the minds of many

of us who will look upward, too, the more for the example of his living.

At the close of this oration, Händel's "Largo" was sung by Mme. Rappold, Mme. Homer, and Messrs. Martini and Blass, accompanied by the Metropolitan Orchestra. After which, Dr. Wise delivered an address, the chief tenor of which was that Conried was a dreamer who accomplished great things for music, drama, and literature.

The choir then rendered the "Amen" from "Parsifal," and, to the strains of Chopin's "Funeral March," the cortège passed out of the Metropolitan on its way to Cypress Hills Cemetery, Brooklyn.

Mrs. Conried was prostrated by the death of her husband. Thereafter she would never pass the Metropolitan Opera House, and it was noted by many of her family and by her friends that she rarely forgot the sting of her loss.

The Press throughout the civilized world was unanimous in its glowing tributes to the artistic activity of Heinrich Conried. One German paper called attention to the fact that his excellence was wonderfully reflected in the remarks made by Prince Henry, after his visit

to New York, when he exclaimed that his evening at the Irving Place Theatre was his most pleasant evening spent in America. In Vienna, the Press marvelled at Conried's vigorous pursuit of foreign stars, and deplored the fact that no European manager was able to keep pace with him. Pollini, in Hamburg, tried to imitate him, but without success.

CHAPTER X

HEINRICH CONRIED, THE MAN

A MAN'S earthly immortality depends on the impression he leaves behind him among his friends. A man's artistic worth is measured by the sum-total of the best and most unprejudiced critical and public opinion held of him. In both these respects, Heinrich Conried measures large and distinctive. It is difficult for a man, occupying such a position as he occupied, to escape personal animosity on the one hand, and unfounded gossip on the other. When a biographer is confronted with conflicting opinions from people of equal importance, it is difficult to do anything more than to place dependence on the wheat rather than on the chaff.

Therefore, it is a pleasure, in retrospect, to give a picture of Mr. Conried, not from the standpoint of what critics, with possibly some judicial justification, have scored him for, as Director and Impresario, but from the standpoint of close friends, who have viewed Mr. Conried at various times in his life, offguard

as it were. It is such a view that affords one an opportunity of measuring the true man. His personality is reflected in the gap it leaves behind him when he is not present, and there is scarcely one of Mr. Conried's friends, with whom I have spoken, who has not emphasized their personal loss in his death, who has not declared that in his presence all things took on a warmer and a more human aspect.

It is among friends that a man shows whether or not he is "a jolly good fellow," and on the testimony of the numerous men who used to gather around the Philosopher's Table at Fleischmann's, on the testimony of friends who have met him abroad and found that, for their personal comfort, he had planned their whole stay, inasmuch as he knew more about the unique and interesting places in Europe than they did—on the testimony of all of these, he was ever a friend in need and a friend in deed.

He was as charitable with some as he was stern and unyielding with others. And if there are people who think him to have been aristocratic and domineering in his attitude, who have declared that he scored the minor people in his employ, and always "played up" to those

in power, let it be said that, throughout his illness, Mr. Conried was always concerned as to the welfare of the wardrobe mistress at the Metropolitan Opera House, Madame Louise Musaeus. Some of the most loyal letters, written to him at this time, have come from her.

There is no telling what it is that prompts a man's likes and dislikes, unless certain policies and attitudes are so pronounced as to determine them. We know, for instance, that Mr. Conried was on very friendly terms with Madame Bloomfeld-Zeisler, but I want to believe that, apart from his admiration for her work as a pianist, his loyalty to her was somewhat prompted by the fact that here, in America, she had an inner sympathy with him, inasmuch as she was born in his home town.

On the testimony of his admirers, the dominant note sounded is that Heinrich Conried was a great friend. "In our thirty-five years' association," said Judge Dittenhoefer, who was Conried's lawyer on all occasions, "we had no differences. I never knew a truer, a more cordial gentleman."

Whatever the jealousies and petty concerns that surrounded him in his official capacity, Conried always succeeded in calling forth from his artists the strongest and firmest loyalty.

Although he might say, as someone once heard him say, that "if he was regarded as a Czar, he might just as well live up to his reputation," there is no doubt that, among his professional associates, he could never have obtained the bulk of work from them he did obtain, unless there had been some magnetism by which he communicated his enthusiasm to others. While I have had varied explanations, as to his firmness and aloofness, from actors at the Irving Place Theatre, I have had likewise certain exclamations, reminiscent of the one already quoted, coming from Mr. von Seyffertitz: "God, how they loved and hated him!" We find those who succeeded Mr. Conried working indefatigably for him. His staff at the Metropolitan, headed by Goerlitz,* carried the brunt of all the work on their shoulders, so as to save the Impresario from any unnecessary strain and stress.

At the Irving Place Theatre, though Mr. Conried was busy behind the scenes, in front there was a large family of friends with whom he often mingled—among them being Mr. Herman Ridder and Mr. Carl Schurz. At the card table, one can picture him playing pinochle

* Mr. Goerlitz, after his retirement from the Metropolitan Opera House, purchased a farm in California, where he died during the month of December, 1915.

with Joseffy, or with Alexander Lambert, an interesting musical figure in New York. He had that power of drawing from his friends the most genial side of them. He had that valuable asset, which characterizes the born business man, of getting from his associates their whole effort, whether in business or pleasure. During his last illness the loyalty of friends and relatives was uppermost. They sank their official regard for him in a higher concern for the welfare of the man. We find the devotion of his wife and son, the wonderful concern of his brother-in-law, Mr. Henry Sperling, the grief-stricken anxiety of his old friend, Mr. Carl Hermann, with whom, as a young man, he used to keep house, and finally, after his death, the widespread expression of grief at the loss of his invigorating personality.

Yet this little man, with his high-heeled suède boots, his nervous, artistic hands, his keen, penetrating eyes, and his broad, sharply marked German face, did not die without the highest honors having been bestowed upon him in recognition of his undoubted abilities. We have already given some idea of the power of the Irving Place Theatre during his régime, and we have likewise emphasized sufficiently the importance of the Impresario's position. This

activity was recognized by the American people, as far as our democracy has ever recognized art work of this character. Abroad it received more pronounced and formal reward. We find, for instance, that Conried counted among his decorations the Order of the Crown, Third Class for Merits in German Art in America, bestowed upon him by the Emperor (1900). Francis Joseph, the Austrian monarch, decorated him with the Francis Joseph Order, and it was immediately after the San Francisco earthquake that Mr. Conried, on going abroad, hastened to his Emperor in person, so as to thank him for the honor. The old monarch was closeted with the Impresario for some time, while officers waited on the stairs, impatient for their turn. It is said that Mr. Conried was more nervous at this interview than he was when called before the German Emperor, inasmuch as in his very romantic mind he had conjured up the fact that Francis Joseph was his Emperor, while Wilhelm was not.

But with the Emperor William he was always on the friendliest terms, receiving from him many tokens of personal esteem. When he was presented with a snuff-box, bearing the royal crest, traced in valuable stones, the Impresario was bidden to have it ever before him as a measure of the German nation's re-

gard for him. "It is men like you I need," the Emperor told him. Another time, Mr. Conried was bidden aboard the *Hohenzollern*, and he made the trip all the way from Carlsbad, where he had been taking the cure. He wore full dress as he came on deck, and was met by the Emperor. Mr. Conried used often to describe this meeting, dwelling on the manner of the Kaiser as he stood close to Conried, almost touching him, and looking squarely into his eyes. The speech of the Emperor was terse, and there was no formality about it.

The visit lasted for several hours, and refreshments, consisting of sherry and cake, were served them. Holding his glass, Mr. Conried was in conversation with the Empress when the Emperor came up behind him. "You've been taking the cure, I hear," he said, "and I know this must be against orders." And he took the glass of sherry from Conried, drinking it off himself. With characteristic grasp of things connected with Germany, Conried found that the Emperor had a record of every speech made by the Director and Impresario, and that his entire career was as well known to the royal family as though he had lived all his life in Berlin or Munich. Mr. Conried used often to say that "the future of the Germans in America lies with Americans, not with Germans,"

and he would on all occasions repeat this remark. He found that the Emperor had hit upon this sentence in one of the reports he had by him, and on the margin he had written: "A speech which one of my consuls should have made years ago."

In 1904, the King of Italy gave Conried the Cavaliere Order, followed, in 1906, by a higher bestowal of the Commendatore Order. In 1891 he received from the Duke of Meiningen the first class of the Ritterkreuz Order, and he likewise received recognition from the King of Belgium.

Such an array of decorations pleased Conried very much indeed, and he was most punctilious in regard to wearing them, always doing so when he was travelling in Austria and Germany, inasmuch as he found they had great weight with the officials of the railway, and he never failed in getting better service. "He always wore the German medals first when he was in Germany," said Mr. Richard Conried, "and the Austrian emblems in Austria, and they served to awe the conductors on the trains.* My father was what we, in America, would call a

* Whenever he went to Europe, he would always try to visit Bad Gastein, the Tyrol and Salsgammerngut. His son declares that he never remembers a time when his father, crossing the German border into Austria, did not utter some characteristic remark of pleasure, a smile overspreading his face.

'kicker' in regard to railroads, for he knew the railroad laws of Germany and Austria backward. At one time, when we were travelling, my father's ticket called for a second-class compartment, but when he arrived he found the car filled; so he slipped into a first-class compartment, and closed the door. When the conductor saw him there, he wanted to collect a first-class fare; not only that, but he wished to fine my father for having opened the first-class door when his ticket did not warrant it. My father refused to obey, claiming that a compartment was guaranteed by his ticket. By this time the train was on its way, and at the next station officials awaited him; but there was little time to argue the case, and the train went on, with our excess fare unpaid. Several stations were passed. There seemed to be more and more officials, until, when we reached our destination, police greeted us. 'Show me the complaint book,' said my father. And, much to the consternation of the officials present, he set forth his grievances in such judicial terms as to make the head officer say that he indeed had just cause for his complaint. Some time after, when we had returned to America, my father received an apology from the German Government, although the officials were careful to add:

‘But, inasmuch as you paid no fine or excess fare, why are you complaining?’ Whenever he was in Germany or Austria, he was never-faillingly annoyed if the waiters spoke English to him. His friends remember how nervous he always became while waiting to be served. He was ever particular to have hot cream and hot water in his coffee, and many a fight he had in restaurants if things were not done as he wished them done. This unyielding attitude on his part made people believe that he was inconsiderate of the working people. That was not so. For did he not come himself from the ranks of the working class? He showed punctilious consideration of those serving him. He would often stop to chat with a driver on the streets, who recognized him and gave him friendly greeting. And those who knew him remember with relish the delightful stories of the folk of Saxony he loved to tell.”

In America, we have not waked up to the delight a well-known man usually takes in medals and ribbons. The consequence is that Mr. Conried, while he received from various sources gold watches and rings, and richly bound and embossed resolutions, was chiefly fêted by special dinners, given in his honor. These were mostly of a social character, although often

Conried would be led into the utterance of remarks, like those at the Association of 'Theatre Managers' Banquet.

On April 24, 1902, Mr. Conried was tendered a banquet by the Players Club. On February 13, 1904, he was given a dinner at the Lotus Club. On February 27, 1904, he was a guest of honor at the Strollers Club. It was at the Lotus Club that he personally confronted two of his critics, Mr. Krehbiel and another, both of whom took occasion to make very stringent remarks in regard to his work at the Metropolitan Opera House.

As a clubman himself, Mr. Conried was a member of the following organizations: The Metropolitan Opera Club, the Harmonie Club, the Association of Theatre Managers, the Austrian Society of New York, the Players, the German-American Historical Society, the Actors' Home, the Deutsche Press Club, the Progress Club, and the United Hebrew Charities.

Being a man continually thrown with professional people, he was rather loath to allow the professional life to invade his home to any great extent. As Director of the Irving Place Theatre, he was obliged, at different times, as we have already stated, to give receptions in honor of his "guesting" artists. And when he

was living at 246 West 39th Street, many such functions had to be gone through; so, likewise, at his 71st Street house, state dinners were presided over when particular "stars" of the Metropolitan had to have unusual courtesies extended to them. But, at such moments, Mr. Conried always regarded his entertainments as official functions, and his artists never were able to say that they had a glimpse of Mr. Conried off guard.

It is from such testimony as that given me by his close friend, Mr. Morris Baar, that I am able to sketch the outlines of Mr. Conried's portrait.

Mr. Baar spoke to me in the following terms:

"To those Mr. Conried knew, he was always thoroughly loyal; people who did not know him, considered him arrogant, but he was honest and frank with those he was fond of. I went with him once to Harvard University, and saw his dealings with the Germanic Department there. I went with him to New Haven, when he took his Irving Place Theatre Company for a performance at Yale. Under all of these conditions, he was in the best of humors and the most jovial of fellows. I was a member of his Bowling Club, and, no matter how busy he was, Conried would always come to us after the play



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for a rest, he would say, and to throw aside his official cares.

“People often told me that he had a ‘swelled’ head, but I interpret his absorption as meaning that his mind was taken up with very great and exacting things. His business made him often preoccupied, and those who did not know him, took this for moroseness or aloofness. He was always ready to do good. He was always ready to be the life of the party. In fact, if he failed in being the life of the party, he showed despondency, like a boy. When Conried became ill and did not come to our weekly gatherings, the spirit of our Bowling Club was gone. He was the very heart of it all.

“When I saw him in Vienna for the last time, he took me under his special care, even though he was sick—it was the last year of his life. I remember that he was in the best of humors, often hospitable even to lavishness. However much he might try to hide it from me, I could tell the uneasiness that was on his mind, for, without giving thought to it, he would refer to certain little business irritations in the midst of his relish of anecdote and of gossip. His concern at this time was the New Theatre.

“This was the period when I saw a great deal of him. I knew him when he was poor, and

when he was affluent, and to those who might say to the contrary, I emphatically declare that I never saw him change in his attitude toward his friends. Oh, he knew poverty! I believe that in his early days one of the reasons why Foerster took him up was due to the fact that, while they were out walking together one day, Conried fainted for lack of food!

"When Conried was first stricken in his last illness, he had no fear of confirmed invalidism; I have often heard him say that, rather than be an invalid all his life, he would kill himself. I do not remember a time when he was not ready to see me during business hours, and even when he was racked in pain.

"Mr. Conried never expected to be rich. When his money came to him, I often heard him say that he wanted his son, Richard, to be in a position where he could work for his. The father did not wish the son to think that a possible inheritance would save him from making his way. Therefore, Conried, during his lifetime, was fearfully liberal, not caring to save. I have often heard him ask, 'What shall I do with my money?'

"He was a very stern disciplinarian, as far as Richard was concerned, hiding behind his firmness a very great love for the boy, a fond-

ness which showed especially during the last year of his life. Toward his son he was eminently fair, but very strict! And I think that that strictness was due to the fact that he feared young Richard had a talent for the stage. He refused to attend any amateur performance in which Richard was to appear, for fear that he might, on seeing him, be convinced of the boy's talent.

"All during his Metropolitan career, I remember his exclaiming, 'I am going to see that Dick has a better education than I had,' and he was ever watchful of his son's career at Columbia University.

"On Richard's twenty-first birthday, his father asked him what he wished, with the result that he was given an automobile. Some time after, young Richard saw an opportunity to 'swop' his car for what he described as 'a dandy,' provided an additional \$300 was paid. So he went to his father to ask for the cash. It was the year of the panic, and even though Conried's family did not know anything at all about his business troubles, he was under a great business strain. But the father told the son that he would think his proposal over, and the next morning consented to the boy's extravagance.

"In Europe one summer, he left Richard his

car, so that he could take some young friends on a tour. The boy was very careful to let his father know how he was getting on, and dropped him a line, describing the excursion, and boasting of the many miles they had gone.

"That's all right," wrote Conried, in response, "but remember gasolene is expensive."

"I recollect at one time how anxious Conried was to read me his speech, which he was going to deliver before the Theatrical Managers of New York," continued Mr. Baar, "and he asked me to make any suggestions in regard to his English I thought would improve it. But after we had gone through one page, he very characteristically said, 'I had rather have the Conried looseness, and know the speech was wholly mine, than have it correct and touched up by some one else.' So we stopped.

"I never regarded Conried as a business man. He was mainly artistic. If he did not care for a play, but was forced to produce it because of certain demands made by his clientele, he lost interest, and rather than attend the first night, he would have some business which would call him suddenly away to Boston, so as to avoid the opening. One might be sure to find Conried, however, under normal conditions, every night at his desk, either at the theatre or at the

opera. He was a man of wonderful patience and of either no enthusiasm whatsoever, or fiery enthusiasm. I shall never forget how aflame he was during the last visit I paid him in Vienna, for he wanted me to go to the Burg Theater and look it over, inasmuch as he had it in mind as a model for the New Theatre.

"From the standpoint of sociability he was a prince among his associates. I shall never forget his cooking. He came to visit us while we were at Fleischmann's Farm in the mountains, Griffin's Corners, Catskills. He had just returned from Europe, and he brought Mrs. Conried with him. His Hungarian goulash made for us out in the open was a rare treat.* When he came he would often bring with him large supplies of black bread, reminiscent of his earlier days. I shall never cease to smile over the memory of his plentiful helping of beans. And after our camp repast was over, how wonderfully he would entertain us with stories! How jovially he would tease us! But alack and alas, if anyone ever tried to tease him! I think that

* Mr. Richard Conried says his father claimed that Foerster taught him how to cook. He always was very strict in his criticism of other people's fare, and once he so emphatically disagreed with Mrs. Fleischmann as to how certain dishes should be prepared, that she made him cook an entire dinner for her one evening, and, out of revenge, invited fifteen people to be her guests. But that did not worry Conried in the least. He managed the Vienna repast without any mishap.

his humor bordered more often on sarcasm than on pure fun. When Conried opened his mouth, others had to be silent, whether they were ambassador, singer, or friend. Young Conried was always silent before his father.

"A man in Mr. Conried's position would naturally have many enemies, and these would be made over the slightest, most trivial things. I remember, once, a man dropping his opera-glasses from the gallery of the Irving Place Theatre on to the head of a man in the orchestra. People actually thought that Conried should have held himself responsible for the accident, simply because it had occurred in his theatre.

"These are just a few random recollections of the man we all loved. He was a rare acquaintance and a very beautiful friend."

The reference that Mr. Baar made to the sternness in Mr. Conried's character is well exemplified by the reminiscent exclamations punctuating Mr. Richard Conried's recollections of his father. "My," he said, "if you were late for supper! Strict! That is not the word for it!" Or again, "My father always spoke German to my mother and to me. He would allow my mother to answer him in English, but if I tried to do so, I had to pay for it!"

The personality of Heinrich Conried, how-

ever, has been very indelibly stamped upon his son in inherited traits. In talking with him, one can easily detect those characteristics which exemplify the training he must have had as a boy, that training which, from the Teutonic point of view, results in a reverence for authority. The many times I talked with Mr. Conried in regard to his father, I was always able to glean from him new and interesting flashes of remembrance—those intimate little touches which showed Conried in so many varied lights. And it is these varied flashes, given at random, which help to complete the portrait of the man.

“My father,” he said, “died intestate. This was in no way an indication that he was lacking in business acumen, but it more readily illustrates a superstitious dread he had of making a will. He was of the old world, and I remember now how he used to regard the New York fashion of young girls going to the theatre with boys, unchaperoned, as something outrageously bold. He was always content to let me take my girl friends, provided he and my mother were somewhere in the house. He was never lenient to any excuse that was not thoroughly logical. I know that to my grief. He was not a good mixer, but when he did mix he was an excellent entertainer. He could not stand

familiarity, and was a great stickler for manners. If people did not show deference to things he thought should be respected, then he always formed a harsh opinion of them. I remember how furious he used to be whenever a messenger-boy entered his office with his hat on.

"As long as I can recollect, he always insisted that his stage life should be kept separate from his home life, and my mother's isolation from the theatre helped him in this respect. She was fond of music, but she was in no way a public woman. She was an ideal house-frau. They never went anywhere without each other, and their home life was absolutely happy. My remembrances of my father abroad, while we were touring, is seeing him in the front seat of the motor with the chauffeur. He always declared that he liked that place best because, when he didn't want to talk he didn't have to. He always had a long paper cigar-holder, and he always smoked a bad brand which was named after him. When he was in health, he usually smoked fifteen cigars a day, and even a larger number when staging plays at his desk. For it must be remembered that he worked out every detail at his desk before he went on the stage. I never knew my father when he was not busy. But he was never so busy that he

could not indulge in walking, which he loved,—or in riding. In his earlier days he enjoyed his horses and his brougham. During his last years, his Mercedes car was his chief pleasure. All through his busiest months at the Metropolitan Opera House, I have often seen him leaving home particularly early, so that he might walk down to the Opera House. He was a terribly early riser, considering that six hours were quite enough for people to sleep.

“He was always interested in talking with specialists. From the time he had to take care of his health, he was continually discussing the efficacy of certain medicines with physicians, ferreting out their special qualities for himself. I believe he had about a million drugs within reach!

“His tastes were simple and his pleasures were equally so. I remember how he loved to drive, and I cannot say that he was particularly careful. He had several accidents, one of them proving nearly disastrous. He was in his surrey when the horse ran away with him. And he had to drive into a hedge, where there was a general break-up. At another time, on the Seabright road at Long Branch, he was driving in the dark when the horse came to a sudden stop. My father whipped him, and the horse

reared frantically, forcing my father to get out and see what was the matter. Much to his surprise, there was a sheer drop before him of one hundred feet.

"He loved dogs. He had one, a Great Dane, six feet high on his hind legs, and crazy about my father. He sold it to the Fleischmanns, and went to Hoboken to see that he was properly shipped. When, later on, he visited the Fleischmanns in the Catskills, the dog was beside himself with joy as he saw my father coming up the steps. He always spoke German to his dogs and to me! And I shall never forget how he would take infinite pains when at the table to teach those dogs little tricks.

"In 1897, we were living at 246 West 39th Street. It was at this time that Cuna Veberidge made a bust of my father. We then moved to 71st Street, about 1900. This house was furnished in different periods. The parlor was Louis XIV, the dining-room old English. There was likewise a Turkish room. My father was prodigal in bestowing jewels upon my mother, and he satisfied his own particular taste by having his agents scour Europe for whatever German manuscripts they could find for him, or for any rare piece of furniture.

"There were two little white scars on my father's forehead. These were the result of a rather startling adventure one night. He had a habit of sleeping with a repeater-watch under his pillow. Once, when he was in St. Louis, he felt something cold on his forehead and put up his hand, thinking that someone was touching him with his watch; instead of which two rats scampered away, not however, before they had inflicted a severe wound on my father's forehead, which had to be sewn up—with the result that these scars were left.

"I remember, when I was at Columbia, I took my father and Herr Mottl, the Director, to a Columbia-Yale football game, and, though my father was excited at the sight of so many people present, he was disgusted at the roughness of the sport, firmly convinced that our American colleges paid too much attention to games and too little to study."

In Karlsbad, Mr. Conried was famous for what became known as the Conried Basket. He would almost invariably send to any American visitor who arrived in town—whether or not he knew the person—a basket of flowers—red roses, white carnations, and blue corn flowers—a patriotic touch of red, white and blue. For Heinrich Conried was loyal to America; how-

ever much he might fight against the educational and social ways of this country, once on the other side he would almost annihilate anyone who spoke against America. Foreign slowness and inattention to detail almost drove him mad. When he was ill at Steinach, on July 4th, he asked that his son roll him in his chair over to the flag-pole. He wanted, personally, to superintend the hoisting of the American "Stars and Stripes," the flag of Austria being on an opposite staff. Even when he was dying, his last desire was to be brought to America.

So we might continue with these little extraneous incidents which go to make up a man. Talking with friends who knew Conried when he first arrived in America, we are able to conjure up in our minds a picture of the little, young man, speaking exquisite German, but wearing execrable shirts, which he bought in large quantities. Even thus early in his career, he was manifesting a strong taste for collecting things, with the consequence that when he died he had a rich hoard of valuable mementoes, including autographs of great worth. In fact, as an autograph-collector he ranked among the foremost in America. It was with particular pleasure that he boasted of manuscripts and autographs by Schiller, Napoleon, Goethe,

Louis XIV, Lessing, Longfellow, and Heine. To these, and another small collection made by Mrs. Conried herself, was added a treasury of golden names. Hardly an artist, famous in the operatic and dramatic world of the last score of years, but had a page in Mrs. Conried's autograph-book, and had written some characteristic and whimsical sentiments—Adelina Patti, Edwin Booth, Ada Rehan, Joseph Joachim, Humperdinck, Mrs. Gilbert, Lilli Lehmann, Caruso, Fulda, Agnes Sorma, Richard Strauss, and Wolfe Farrare, to mention only a few of the notables. In the line of books, Mr. Conried had a complete collection of the German classics.

We have already given a picture of Conried the actor, vain-glorious and attitudinizing. We see him at the height of his power at the Irving Place Theatre, we see him with a Czar-like grip at the Metropolitan Opera House, and finally we see him, an invalid, wheeled to his office in a chair, and attended by his trained nurse and by a faithful attendant, Frank, who never left his side for an instant. When he was too ill to go to the office, "Goldener Heinrich," as his sister called him, would demand his slate, upon which the repertoire for the week at the Metropolitan was printed, and he would study

it over and send his orders to the Opera House by messenger.

It was during this time that he was racked with the many problems preceding his resignation. This in itself would have been bad enough, but he was racked with pain also. Yet the fortitude of the man never gave out. It is told of him how he went abroad on his final trip, suffering so much that he was careful to have the door closed, for fear his wife and son would hear him in his agony.

His trained nurse tells me that, after a long illness, in 1907, when Mr. Conried was finally able to go to his office, he was driven down Broadway. As the Metropolitan came into view, he leaned forward and stretched out his arms, exclaiming "My Opera House!" Truly the man's heart was in his work, though there were many who would deny it.

All during this exacting period of illness, Mrs. Conried never left her husband's side except once when, in Berlin, Ambassador Hill persuaded her to come to the Embassy, during the ovation which was accorded King Edward VII on his visit to the Kaiser. How strange all this sounds in view of the Great War!

Mr. Conried's death was not only a great blow to his family—his wife never recovered

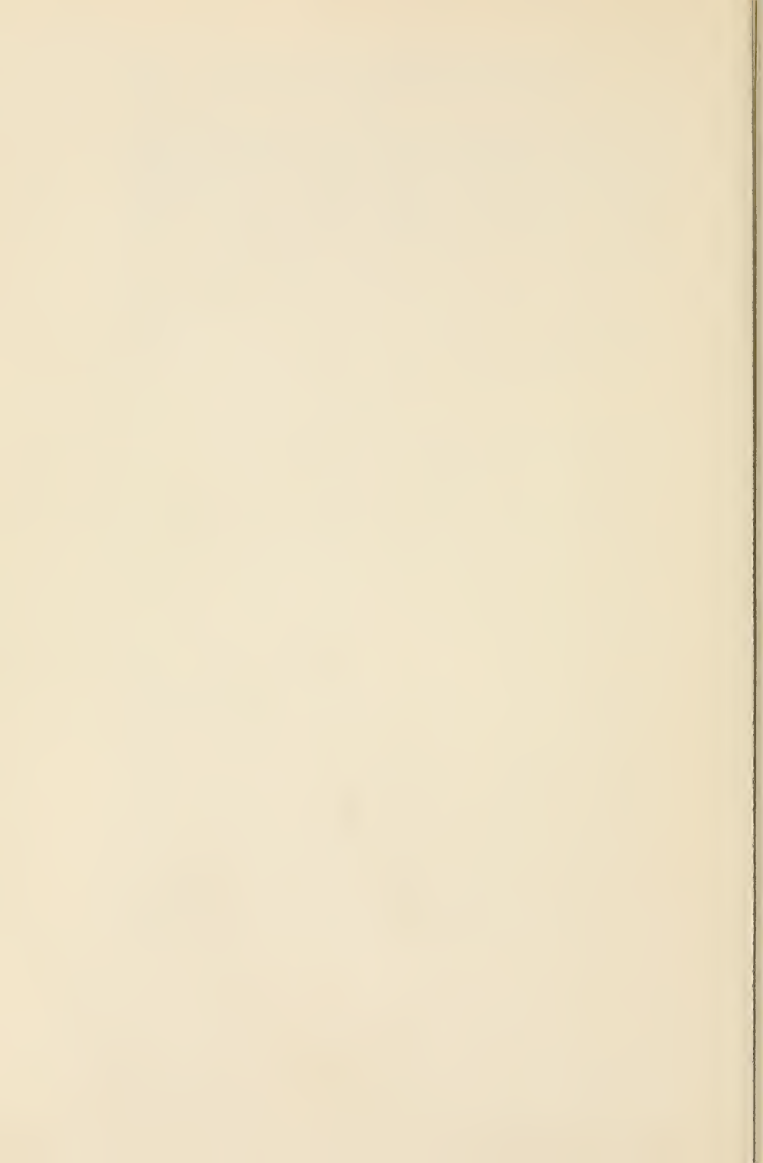
from the shock, and survived her husband only a year and a half—but it hit hard his associates and his friends. His life-long companion, Mr. Hermann, never failed to send a postal-card to his sick comrade every Sunday, inquiring after his health; and, alone in his room in New York, he heard the newsboys below in the street, calling out the death of Heinrich Conried. He survived his comrade only one month.

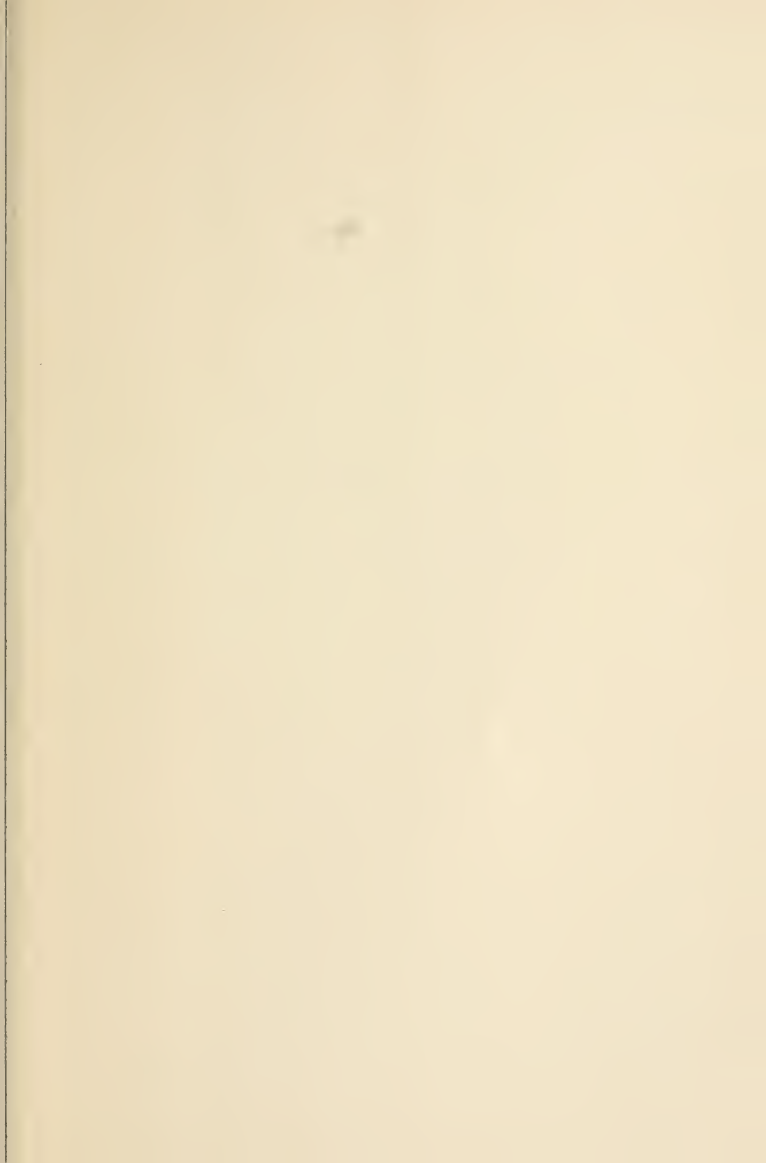
There was a characteristic of Mr. Conried which no one can deny him—his indefatigable pluck. No mishap so great that he could not rise above it! Even after his resignation as Impresario at the Metropolitan Opera House, though he knew that his physical condition could not stand too much work, his active mind turned to planning a livelihood for himself, however much he really did not need it. We know, for instance, when he went abroad, that he was negotiating to represent the Dictograph Company. We know that, as an inventor, he was actively at work trying to frame up some practical scheme of commercial value. As in years gone by, he had invented a clasp for the old-fashioned pocket-book, so now he invented a clasp to hold elevated tickets. But none of these ideas were pushed sufficiently to bring him any immediate profit.

Such was the career of a man to whom artistic talent cannot be denied, and yet who was equally famed for the excellence of his practical judgment. As one of his personal staff said, "He was a brave and a good fighter. He never turned his back on any problem. He faced it unflinchingly. His genius consisted in assimilating the ideas of others. He was very original in overcoming what to others might have been insurmountable barriers."

He succeeded in establishing an art standard, and, because of that, he deserves to take his place as one of the most distinctive theatrical managers America has ever had. He helped to place the Metropolitan Opera House on a firm basis, which did much for those who were to follow him. His impress has not yet disappeared from opera management. Working at a time when the repertory idea was unfamiliar in America, he succeeded in turning the public eye on his efforts. Assuming control of the Metropolitan at a time when everyone thought Opera spelled ruin, he succeeded in making large profits during several of his seasons. Whatever his shortcomings—and no artistic manager is flawless in dealing with conditions that in themselves are full of flaws—they are overbalanced by the positive and excellent effects

of his artistic career. When all is told, apart from his personal worth to his friends, apart from the love and reverence of his family, Heinrich Conried will occupy a large and worthy position in the art history of America.





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